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VAUX OF HARROWDEN

A RECUSANT FAMILY

BY
GODFREY ANSTRUTHER, O.P.

*Thus yields the Cedar to the Axe's edge
Whose arms gave shelter to the Princely Eagle,
Under whose shade the Ramping Lion slept,
Whose top-branch o'erpeer'd Jove's spreading tree,
And kept low shrubs from Winter's Powerful Wind.*

HENRY VI, PART III.

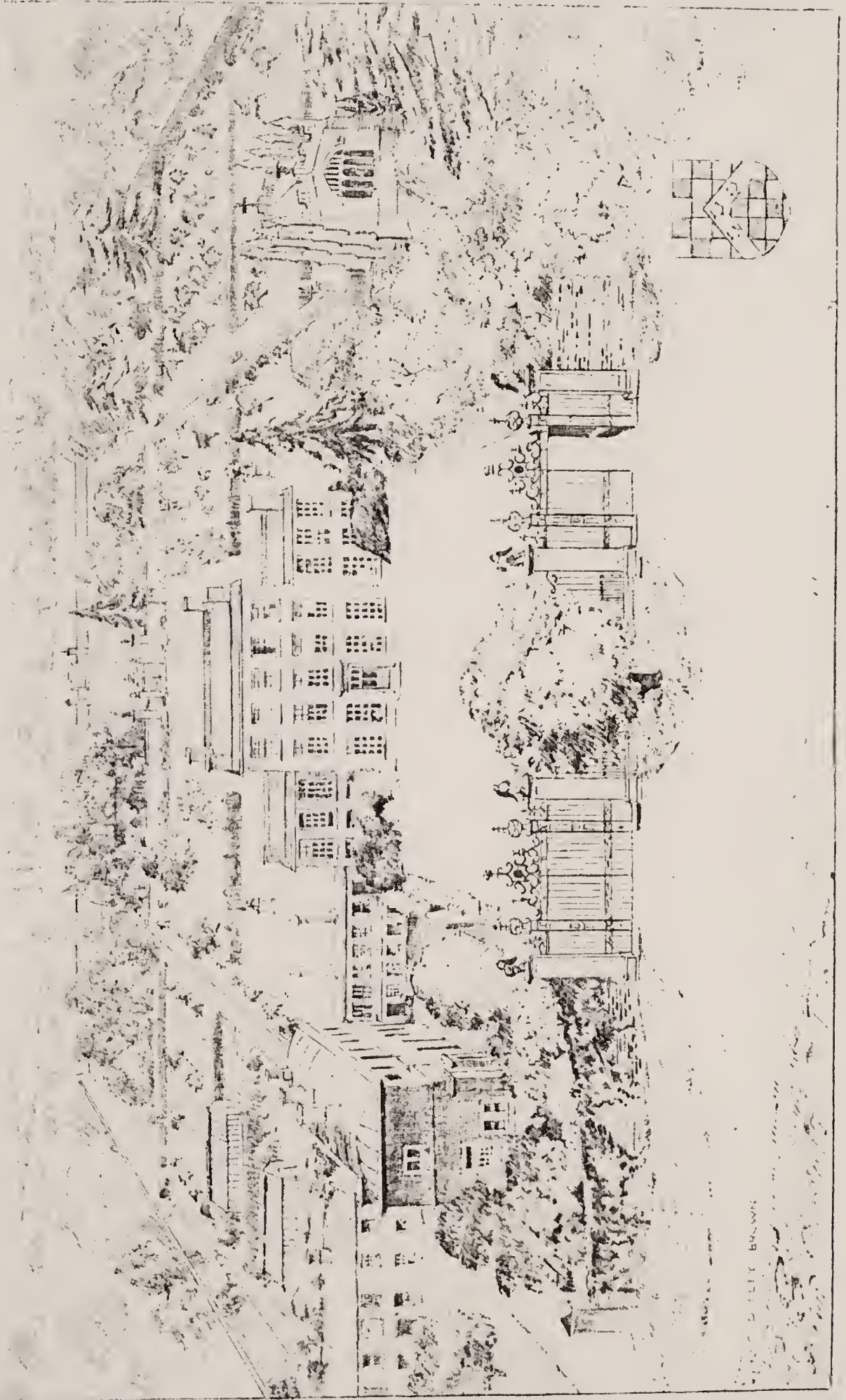
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FOR
GRACE LADY VAUX

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INTRODUCTION

ALIVING master of English letters was taken some seventy years ago to visit Mlle de Montgolfier, who could still describe how in her childhood she had leaned from a balcony and seen the mob pelting along the Faubourg-St. Antoine to storm the Bastille. Remembrance of such a meeting could scarcely fail to invest the dullest Sorbonnical historian's page with colour and tumult for the least sensitive reader. The same sharp sense of contact with the living—not to say exciting—flesh and blood and nerves of history vibrates constantly in Father Anstruther's pages, which so skilfully combine fully-documented scholarship with a vivid and quietly humorous grace as to suggest *passetemps de dominicain* in place, for once, of the time-honoured *travail de bénédictin*.

One might think the adventures of a still-flourishing English noble family which was represented at Katharine of Aragon's wedding and on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, which was involved in the Babington and the Gunpowder Plots, which suffered eighty continuous years of hazard and persecution and crushing taxation for the Faith it held and holds, which went (bled white) into eclipse under the Commonwealth and emerged into the peerage again under Victoria—one might assume that the most labouring pen could hardly fail to catch a glow from such a story. But, as we all know, history is fatally attractive in every age to that type of pedant who, as Rivarol said of Condorcet, writes in opium on sheets of lead. As for the other extreme of literary vice, equally prevalent today, the opportunities offered the romantic by the Vaux records need no underlining. The "Gothick" school would have loved them dearly, and one may pleurably imagine the glitter in the eyes of a Horace Walpole, the dignified flutterings of a Mrs. Radcliffe, the delighted grunt of a Scott, an Ainsworth, or a Macaulay had any of them lighted on the documents which nourish this book. A three-decker novel called *Harrowden Hall, or the Doom of the Vaux*, would inevitably have issued sooner or later from Murray or Constable to tickle Victorian sensibility with its tale of Popish intrigue and

villainy; of conspirators and disguised Jesuits and mass-priests popping in and out of their holes in Gothic turrets, of midnight raids—even Ainsworth's most ardent disciple, incidentally, never imagined a hundred pursuivants swooping at once—of arrest and escape, torture and execution, and all the brouhaha and brabbles revealed in the authentic Elizabethan-Jacobean records; the whole suitably farced, as French cooks say, with a few essential properties like tolling bells, walled-up nuns, and hooded figures gliding behind the tapestries. Embroidery of any kind is as absent from Father Anstruther's pages as dullness. The facts are enough.

Doubtless to the average reader, such as I, the chapters on the Gunpowder Plot are the most absorbing. Not the least of the murky enigmas enwrapping the Plot for (it would seem) all time is the embroilment in that harebrained escapade of the Vaux, a family notable for mental balance and a sober commonsense derived, possibly, from a lawyer-ancestor. The boyish insouciance of what Anne Vaux called the "wild heads" astonished their Catholic contemporaries no less than it does us, and it is clear from this latest review that the Plot was known to the Government from the beginning—and how else, indeed, does one explain that carefree purchase of four tons of gunpowder, those months of daylight navvy-work in the heart of a London swarming with Cecil's spies? Crookback Robin knew as well as Hitler or Stalin the art of nursing for profit, as of cooking the evidence. Why the Plot failed the documents and letters quoted by Father Anstruther show well enough, and this is not the place to indulge any cynical conjecture on the Muse of History's indulgent tut-tuttings to-day had the Plot succeeded. A wry and recusant Elizabethan epigram sums up such speculations neatly enough.

Treason doth never prosper—what's the reason?

If it do prosper, none do call it treason.

The same Fifth, with a different collection of guys, would make a refreshing change.

So, reading these pages, we view the Plot to some extent from the inside, and share with the contemporary Vaux some of the suspense and bewilderment and anxieties involved. If the family, and their intimates the Treshams, were not called on at any time during the Penal period to endure the rack, the gibbet, and the disembowelling-knife, one of them perished mysteriously in

prison, and they certainly paid heavily for recusancy for the next couple of generations or more. Not all the old English Catholic nobility showed such obstinacy for their Faith. In those who did, their tireless courage seems to me to compensate largely for that aloof "Low Church" attitude towards the Second Spring which made Manning so testy. Thus in the first World War did the veterans of 1914 regard the flooding reinforcements of the later years, with their newfangled methods. It would seem, since the heir of the sixth Lord Vaux was entrusted to Wiseman's care at Oscott, that the Vaux did not share the insularity of some of their Catholic equals. Here again one might permissibly trace the shrewd, calm influence of that far-off Northamptonshire lawyer who married the heiress and died in 1405. He failed them in the Plot year, perhaps, but, on the whole, not often.

Resignation was not a Vaux characteristic. One might pick out a brabble of Charles I's time as a pleasing indication that the oppressor did not get things all his own way with them. A Mr. Knightley, J.P., heading a search-party for concealed weapons in the houses of Romish recusants, fell foul of Lord Vaux and was violently "strook" during the ensuing debate. A good final left-hook to Mr. Knightley's jaw must have made up for the current year's non-attendance tax at least, and was probably as satisfying to the Lord Vaux of the period as a well-turned sonnet to his melancholy late-Tudor predecessor the poet, or those costly trappings and fal-lals of velvet and gold to the Vaux who matched the cream of his wardrobe with the French on the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Such incidents, like so many in the memoirs of Father Gerard, S.J., which have been drawn on aptly in their appropriate place, illustrate very agreeably what journalists call the Human Note. It throbs frequently in Father Anstruther's pages.

D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS.

PREFACE

A RECUSANT is one who refuses. The word first appears in the Statutes as early as 1548 (2 and 3 Edw. VI ch. 20) when it meant an incumbent who refused to pay tenths to the king. Early in Elizabeth's reign it meant one who refused the Oath of Supremacy. It was later used to designate a papist who refused to resort to divine worship in protestant churches. This is its principal use. It was apparently not until the 18th century that it was extended to puritans and nonconformists. At all events it is used in this book as synonymous with "obstinate papist."

By the crushing penal laws recusants were debarred from holding any responsible office, from attendance at English schools and universities, from service in the army and navy, from the practice of most professions, from free movement from place to place, as well as from the practice of their religion. They were forced to live in obscurity and sometimes under feigned names, their baptisms and marriages, and sometimes their funerals were carried out in secret and no records kept. Their children were smuggled abroad to be educated, and many preferred to stay there permanently. Their homes were subject to search, their muniments to confiscation, and it was safer not to keep family papers. Their conveyances of property are often fictitious and deliberately confused, to prevent forfeiture. A shadow lies over their lives, like the shadow that lies over Shakespeare. Perhaps it is the same shadow of popery in his case. These facts are mentioned here only to explain the peculiar difficulties in finding the materials for the story of a recusant family. There is evidence in plenty of their fines and their disabilities, but of their lives, their loves, their personalities and friendships, and the intimate details upon which biography builds, there is often next to nothing.

Loe here the bare hedde scull
By whose bald signes I knowe
That stooping Age away shall pull
That youthfull yeares did sowe.

Many of the surviving records are as bald as the skull that Thomas Vaux contemplates, and they lead to deductions not more exhilarating than his.

This is all the more regrettable, because it is primarily to the great Catholic families that the survival of Catholicism is due. Without their heroic zeal, their wealth, and their great houses, the work of the priests would have been impossible.

Few amongst the wealthy families were as prominent as Vaux* of Harrowden. One after another the great Jesuit missionaries came to their doors for shelter, and each brought them a load of trouble and anxiety. If none of the Vaux women was destined to share the glorious death of Margaret Clitheroe, Anne Line or Margaret Ward, it was not for want of running the same hazards as they. Moreover there are three chance occurrences that make it possible to overcome, to some extent, the dearth of family documents, and to tell the story of this family in some detail.

The first was the discovery, in 1828, in a hiding-hole at Rushton Hall, of a large bundle of books and papers that belonged to Sir Thomas Tresham. These form the basis of the narrative from 1580 to 1597.

The second was the appointment of Fr. John Gerard S.J., as chaplain at Harrowden. He has left a wonderful autobiography which carries the story on to 1605.

The third was the Gunpowder Plot in which members of the family were all too uncomfortably prominent.

These form the main section. In this and in the third part I have simply followed the fortunes of the family. In the first part, where documents on the family are scarce, I have tried to trace some of the effects of the Reformation in Northamptonshire, a subject that the county historians have studiously ignored.

Of the enormously complicated political history of the period I have said no more than seemed necessary to elucidate the story. There must be here and there views expressed that will not pass unchallenged. Obviously they could not be fully developed in a book of this kind, nor are they of much importance. They are meant only to introduce the contemporary records which make up the bulk of the book. In short I have summoned

*Vaux rhymes with *Hawkes*. Judging by the old spellings it once rhymed with *Horse* or *Haws*, but never with *Hoe*.

about a thousand eye-witnesses of the events here related. They include kings and queens, statesmen, bishops, martyrs, friends and enemies, spies and apostates, and many a humble serving man and serving maid. Here are famous names like Campion that are held in honour all over the world: here are witnesses whose evidence was extracted by the horror of the rack. But they are introduced principally for the light they throw on the lives of various members of the Vaux family.

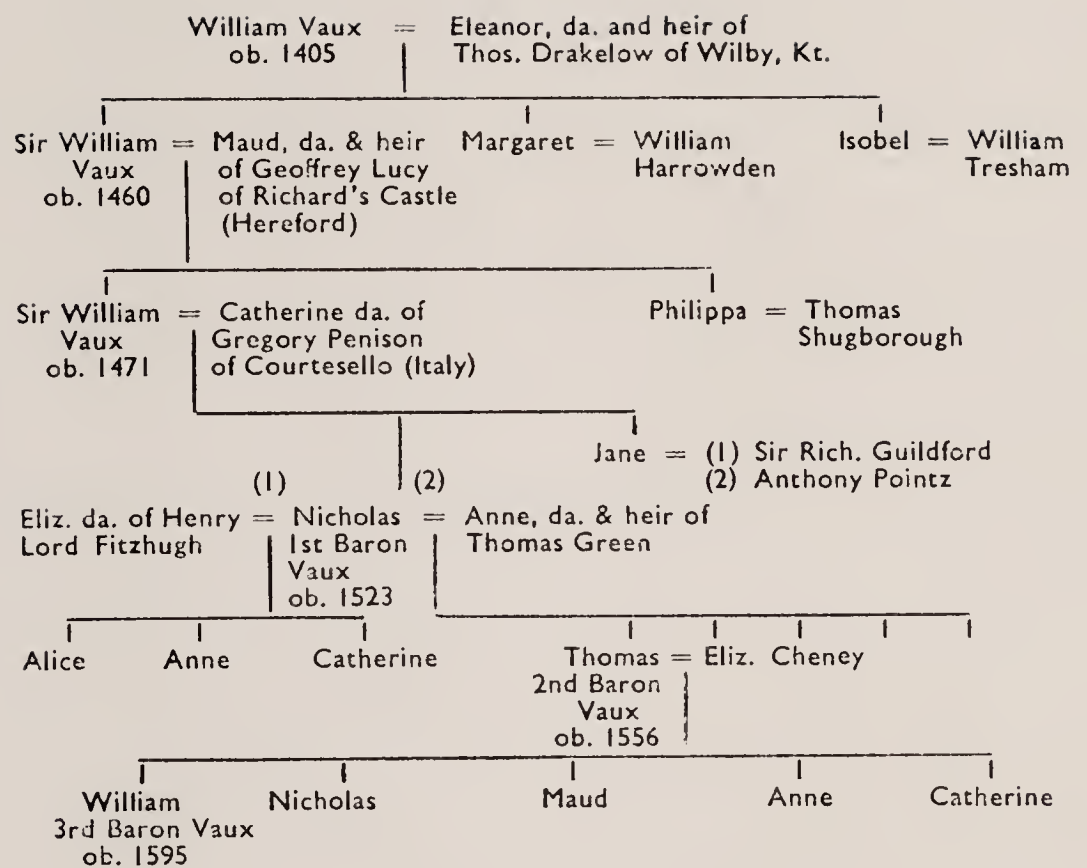
As far as possible I have let the witnesses speak for themselves. Some may find the constant quotations and the old English make tedious reading. I have met them half way by modernising the spelling. But I hope there are others who prefer a genuine old tapestry, frayed and faded as it must be, to any conjectural and imaginative restoration. For them I have left here and there, usually in personal letters, the actual spelling of the originals. I have, however, found no satisfactory way of standardising proper names. It seems pedantic to change them all to forms that never occur in the documents, and unless they are too exotic to be recognisable I have usually left them as I found them, with some inevitable inconsistency.

I express my deep indebtedness to the officials and staffs of the various public depositories, and to the owners of various private collections, where I have been privileged to work in happier days; to Miss N. O'Farrell and Miss L. Drucker who have taught me what little (and how little) I know of the treasures of the Public Record Office: to Fr. Philip Hughes and Fr. Rupert Grove, O.P. for much useful criticism: to the Jesuit Fathers at Farm St. and Stonyhurst for help of many kinds: to Mrs. Maunsell of Thorpe Malsor for allowing me to reproduce the portrait of Sir Thomas Tresham: to Dr. Louis B. Wright, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, for permission to print the poems of Henry Vaux: to Mr. Dudley Brown for his drawings specially made for this book: to Mr. Wyndham Lewis for his Introduction: to Mr. Robert Johns, the publisher, for his personal interest and advice: to the late George V. Charlton and Mrs. Charlton who first suggested this book: and above all to Lady Vaux and Mr. Gordon Gilbey who uphold the great traditions of Harrowden Hall.

PART I
THE CEDAR

*Dost thou not see how Death through smiteth with his lance
Some by wars some by plagues and some with worldly chance :
What thing is there on earth, for pleasure that was made,
But goeth more swift away than doth the summer shade ?*

THOMAS VAUX.



VAUX OF HARROWDEN

CHAPTER I

NICHOLAS AND JANE

I

UNDER a beautiful brass in the chancel of the church of All Saints, Great Harrowden, in the county of Northampton lie buried William Harrowden and Margaret his wife, daughter of Sir Giles St. John. He died on 10 December 1434,¹ and she in August 1441.² Their son, also William, married Margery Vaux, and thus were linked together for all time the names which form the title of this book.

This brass has not survived unscathed the troubled centuries that separate those days from ours, but fate has been kinder to it than to the other monuments of the family. Many later generations lived and died and were buried either here or at Irthlingborough, but their monuments no longer exist. For reasons that this book sets out to explain, five centuries must pass before a descendant of William and Margaret is allowed to lie in peace beside them.

Margery Vaux belonged to a family that could trace an unbroken descent from the thirteenth century, and a less certain descent from the Conquest. Her father, William Vaux, was a prosperous lawyer, owning property known as Le Kay in Northampton, and a house in Gold Street opposite the church of St. Peter's.³ He married a rich heiress, Eleanor, daughter of Thomas Drakelow of Wilby (Northants.), and died in 1405.⁴ His only son, William, born in 1400⁵, married another heiress, Maud, daughter of Geoffrey Lucy, of Richard's Castle (Herefords.) He was sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1436, and represented the county in parliament in 1442.⁶

This second William had another sister Isabel who married William Tresham of Sywell (Northants.). Tresham was Attorney

The small numerals throughout the book refer primarily to the sources of information and reference should be made to the list which appears following the appendices.

General to Henry V, and Speaker of the House in 1440, 1447, and 1450. On 22 September 1450,⁷ as he was riding by Moulton Park near Northampton, saying his matins,⁸ he was run through with a spear by the servants of Lord Gray of Ruthyn, and his son Thomas sorely wounded.⁹ His own servants "hearing the cry, came and cut off each end of the spear in him, bringing him back to Northampton, where, after the truncheon was pulled out he died."¹⁰ His son Thomas, however, recovered from his wounds, only to end his life on the scaffold, as we shall see.

William Vaux the second was succeeded by his only son, Sir William Vaux, who was born in 1437.

Like all his family and relatives a staunch Lancastrian, he seems to have had some office at court in the service of Queen Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI. The constant recurrence of the name Margaret indicates where the affections of the family lay. In the Queen's train was a lady-in-waiting named Catherine Penison, a native of Courtesello, near Alessandria, in what is now northern Italy, but was then the kingdom of Provence. Her father Gregory Penison may have been an exile, whose family were born and settled abroad. William and Catherine, both under age, were married in 1456. In the December of that year King Henry VI "by our special grace have granted . . . to our beloved subject Catherine wife of William Vaux junior, esquire, born in the confines of the County of Provence, and to their heirs . . . to be reputed in all things as natives and as our true and faithful lieges within our Kingdom of England" with the same rights and privileges as English-born subjects.¹¹

On 10 November, 1460¹² William's father died and he inherited the vast estates that had come to the family by two profitable marriages. But he was not to enjoy them for long, for in 1461 Henry VI was dethroned and the Yorkist Edward IV seized power. There followed a sweeping bill of attainder that included almost every distinguished Lancastrian; the King and Queen, their son Edward, the dukes of Somerset and Exeter, four earls, five lords and one hundred and thirty-eight knights, priests and esquires. They were adjudged to suffer the penalties of treason, the loss of all honours, forfeiture of their estates, and a traitor's death, if they had not already fallen fighting. Among those from Northants., were Henry duke of Exeter, and five knights, viz. William Catesby, Thomas Tresham, son of William Tresham

and Isabel Vaux, Richard Harrowden, Thomas Green, and William Vaux.¹³

Queen Margaret strove to rally the forces of the House of Lancaster, but after many defeats and hair-breadth escapes, she sailed for the continent with a small retinue of some fifty friends including Sir William Vaux and his wife.

Among the exiles was also Sir John Fortescue, author of *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*. In this work he describes how the young Prince Edward, as soon as he was old enough, gave himself up entirely to warlike pursuits, practising horsemanship and the use of the then known weapons, with the help of his devoted followers. In a private letter, written on 13 December, 1464, he mentions Vaux as one of the exiles, and tells us something of their privations :

“We be all in great poverty, but yet the Queen sustaineth us in meat and drink, so as we be not in extreme necessity. Her highness may do no more to us than she doth. Wherefore I counsel you to spend sparsely such money as ye have, for when ye come hither ye shall have need of it. And also here be many that need, and would desire to part with you of your own money, and in all this country is no man that would or may lend you any money, have ye never so great need.”¹⁴

Most of the possessions of Sir William Vaux were granted to the King's servitor Ralph Hastings, esquire of the body. They comprised the manors or lordships of Great and Little Harrowden, Orlingbury, Isham, Wilby, Wellingborough and Northampton in his own county, and nineteen other estates in five other counties.¹⁵

In 1470 Queen Margaret formed a reluctant alliance with the Earl of Warwick in an attempt to win back her kingdom. In August he left for England, and soon news came to the Queen at Paris that King Henry VI had been freed and was in possession of his throne. Margaret determined to set out for England and eventually, on Easter eve 1471, landed at Weymouth with her son, and a retinue that included Sir John Fortescue, and Sir William and Catherine Vaux. They kept Easter at the abbey of Cearne, close by, while Warwick was fighting the battle of Barnet, in which he lost his life, and which sounded the death-knell of all Lancastrian hopes.

The tragic news of the defeat and of the recapture of Henry VI reached Margaret the following day and left her speechless with misery and despair. The sorrowful cortege made its way to Beaulieu Abbey to find sanctuary. Here many old friends rallied to her cause. Her son overcame her desire to return to France, and a gathering army made for Wales to link up with the forces of Jasper Tudor. They reached Tewkesbury where the Earl of Somerset decided to make a stand.

On the 4th of May they joined battle with the forces of Edward IV. Queen Margaret watched the battle with growing despondency and alarm till she swooned from exhaustion and suspense and was carried by her attendants, including Sir Thomas Tresham, to her chariot, and conveyed through the gates of Tewkesbury park to a small religious house where Catherine Vaux had already sought refuge. Meanwhile her forces were utterly defeated, and when dusk came down upon the field that to this day is called the "bloody field," William Vaux lay among the dead.

Queen Margaret and her faithful followers were soon brought out of their refuge, and her son foully murdered, with the connivance if not encouragement of Edward IV. On Monday the 6th Thomas Tresham and others were executed in the market-place at Tewkesbury. Prince Edward was buried in the choir of the abbey church. "Sir William Vaux, slain in the field, and buried in the parish church before an image of our Lady of Pity in the north side . . . Sir Thomas Tresham, knight, taken and beheaded, whose body was buried in the said monastery church before a pillar betwixt the altar of St. James and St. Nicholas."¹⁶ Thus Vaux and Tresham whose descendants were to be so closely linked by ties of blood and suffering were laid to rest in the same church, together with Prince Edward and the flower of the Lancastrian party.

Margaret was eventually brought to London and on 22 May was lodged in the Tower, where her husband had been a prisoner five long years.

That same night Henry VI was done to death, his body carried through the London streets to Blackfriars, and at midnight conveyed secretly to Chertsey Abbey for burial. Queen Margaret was allowed to have three womenfolk to attend upon her in the Tower. One of them was Catherine Vaux, who stayed with

her throughout her five years imprisonment in England.¹⁷ A hundred and thirty years later another Vaux, for her loyalty and devotion to a priest, was to find herself a prisoner in the same Tower, but by then it had ceased to be a prison for royalty, and had become the most dreaded of all the London prisons.

Catherine Vaux accompanied Queen Margaret into exile once more in January 1476, and when this tragic queen died at Dampierre in August 1482, Catherine was one of those who witnessed her will.¹⁸ Catherine's poverty was so extreme that even the Yorkist king, Edward IV, took pity on her and on her two children, Nicholas and Jane. On 12 March 1478, he granted her for life the manors of Stanton (Bucks.), and Marcham (Berks.), manors which had been forfeited on her husband's attainder, "because the same Catherine has not whence she can support herself and her children without alms, and it is likely that they would perish from continual penury."¹⁹

Thus was a rich and powerful family brought to ruin and to the brink of extinction. But fickle fortune's wheel was soon to make another turn. Catherine's son Nicholas, brought up in such poverty, was destined to hand on a name that will live for ever in the annals of the Catholic Church in England.

II.

The only account we have of the early life of Nicholas is a manuscript in the College of Arms which informs us that "he flourished *summa gratia*, in the household of Margaret Countess of Richmond."²⁰ This was Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII. Among her many benefactions to learning was the employment of an Oxford scholar, Maurice Westbury, to educate "certain young gentlemen at her finding," and it may well be that she took pity on a family that had lost everything in the Lancastrian cause.

At all events his youth was spent in poverty and obscurity, until 1485. In the August of that year Henry Tudor, son of Margaret Beaufort, returned from exile, raised an army, and on 22 August won the battle of Market Bosworth and the crown of England. On 7 November following he was solemnly crowned and held his first Parliament. On that very day Nicholas Vaux presented a petition praying for the reversal of

the attainder of his father, and the restoration of all his forfeited lands. This was immediately granted, and he became with dramatic suddenness a man of immense wealth.²¹

It must have been about this time that he married his first wife, Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Henry Lord Fitzhugh, and widow of Sir William Parr. The date is not known, but it could not have been much later, as his eldest daughter married in 1501. By his first marriage Sir Nicholas had three daughters, Alice who married Sir Richard Sapcott of Elton (Hunts.),²² Anne who was born in 1494 and married Sir Thomas Le Strange of Hunstanton (Norfolk),²³ and Catherine who married Sir George Throckmorton of Coughton (Warwicks.).

It is beyond the scope of this book to trace the collateral branches of the family, but as Coughton will appear again later on, a word may here be said of Catherine's family.

The registers of the English Benedictine nuns at Pontoise give a brief biography of My Lady Catherine Wigmore, who was Abbess of the foundation at Boulogne and died in 1656. Among other things it is stated that

“Her mother was Mrs. Anne Throckmorton, daughter to Sir John Throckmorton. . . . It is said that her great-grandmother, who was daughter to [Nicholas] Vaux, of the Lord Vaux his ancestors, that there did accompany her funeral eleven score lineally descended from her.”²⁴

And no wonder, for Catherine Vaux bore her husband eight sons and eleven daughters, and they may all be seen on her brass in Coughton church.²⁵

Among her descendants were four of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators, and the wife of a fifth.²⁶

After the reversal of his attainder Nicholas Vaux lived at Harrowden, as tenant to his great-aunt Margery. When she died at an advanced age on 20 October 1486, having outlived her two sons, it was found that she was seised of the manors of Plumpton and Harrowden, and that her heir was her daughter Margaret Garnon then aged sixty. It is also stated in the Inquisition that the manor of Great Harrowden, called “Harowdens Maner” and worth ten marks (£6 13s. 4d.) was held by Nicholas Vaux, esquire, service unknown.²⁷ Perhaps it was at this time that he built the great house of which we shall hear so much.



WILLIAM HARROWDEN
(ob. 1434)



Quia in unum sit unum. In unum
Sunt deus et filius et spiritus sanctus in

MARGARET HIS WIFE
(ob. 1441)

Brass in Great Harrowden Church



Figure 1. A standing female figure, possibly a statue or a person in a long, flowing dress, positioned on the left side of the page.



Figure 2. A standing female figure, possibly a statue or a person in a dress, positioned on the right side of the page.

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Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure 4. A standing female figure, possibly a statue or a person in a dress, positioned on the right side of the page.

On Sunday, 24 September, 1486, the king's eldest son, Prince Arthur, was christened in Winchester cathedral with the full Catholic rites that were soon to be swept away. My Lady Vaux (presumably Nicholas' mother), was one of the guests. After the baptism by the bishop of Worcester the child was "borne to the High Altar, and laid thereupon by his Godmother. After certain ceremony, when the Gospel was done, *Veni Creator Spiritus* was begun and solemnly sungen by the King's Chapel with organs, and *Te Deum* also, During which season the Earl of Oxford took the Prince in his right arm, and the bishop of Exeter confirmed him; and the bishop of Salisbury knit the band of linen about his neck. Then the Marquis of Dorset, the Earl of Lincoln, and the Lord Strange served the Queen Elizabeth of towel and water, and Sir Roger Cotton and Master West served the other Gossips." After the Queen and others had made their offertory of gold, "they proceeded to St. Swithin's shrine and offered . . . Then *Iste Confessor* with the anthem of St. Swithin was sung, and spices and Ipocras, with other sweet wines, great plenty . . . and then was he borne to the King and Queen, and had the blessing of Almighty God, Our Lady, and St. George, and of his father and mother. In the churchyard were set two pipes of wine, that every man might drink enough."²⁸

In 1487 Nicholas donned his armour and fought for the King to suppress the insurrection in support of Lambert Simnel, a pretender to the crown. He took part in the battle of Stoke on 16 June,²⁹ and after the battle his services were rewarded by the honour of knighthood. His arms, were: Chequy argent and gules, on a chevron azure three roses or.³⁰

There is a manuscript "Book of certain Triumphs," written by some Elizabethan herald, which gives the "Articles which four gentlemen have enterprised to do by the King's commandment and for the pleasure of the Ladies." In what is evidently a copy of the actual challenge which they nailed up at court, they state that they are prepared to take on at jousting, tilting, and coursing, all those who sign their names beneath theirs. "Also the said first four gentlemen pray and require every man not to think that they take this said enterprise for other intent but the accomplishing the said King's commandment and

pleasure of the said Ladies, and also for the better exercise to learn the exercise of the deeds of arms."³¹ The first of the four gentlemen was Sir Nicholas Vaux, and thus he appears as he was to appear through life, soldier and courtier.

On 25 November, 1487, Dame Catherine Vaux was present at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, (wife of Henry VII) and Sir Nicholas was one of the twelve knights who, in relays of four, carried the canopy over the royal litter from Mark Lane to Westminster Abbey.³² This is the last recorded public appearance of Nicholas' mother, but she lived on till at least the first year of Henry VIII, for on 28 June, 1509, she was granted an annuity of twenty marks during her life out of the lordships of Middleton and Malden (Kent), and Havering (Essex.).³³ She was buried in the London Blackfriars.³⁴ There is a manuscript book of devotions in the Bodleian that seems once to have been her property.³⁵

Her daughter Jane followed in her footsteps and was destined to spend her whole long life in the service of the royal household. How much her services were valued will appear later on, but as early as 1489, when she married Sir Richard Guildford, she was so highly thought of that her marriage was graced by the presence of the King and Queen.³⁶

Nicholas was apparently living at Harrowden at this time, for, in December 1488, he was on the commission for assessing the number of archers that each nobleman in Northamptonshire was bound to furnish for the King's army, preparing for the relief of Brittany, which had been overrun by Charles VIII of France.³⁷ The campaign ended in the ignominious Peace of Etaples in 1492, which left the French king master of Brittany. He was one of the English knights that met the French delegates and surrendered the rich province in return for a large sum of money.³⁸

Two years later, on 13 November 1494, he was present at the elaborate ceremony and banquet on the occasion of conferring the Knighthood of the Bath on Henry Duke of York, the King's second son, then a child of five and later Henry VIII.³⁹ On 5 November, 1495, he became Sheriff of Northamptonshire,⁴⁰ and shortly after his year in office he took part in the suppression of yet another pretender, Perkin Warbeck. He fought in the battle of Blackheath on 17 June, 1497, and was

rewarded by being made a knight banneret,⁴¹ a higher and hereditary form of knighthood.

By 1499 Henry VII's marriage had brought him five children, and Jane had become governess to the two little girls. She was doubtless present on that memorable occasion of which Erasmus has left us a vivid picture :

"I was staying at Lord Mountjoy's country house [at Greenwich] when Thomas More came to see me and took me out with him for a walk as far as the next village [Eltham], where all the King's children, except Prince Arthur, who was then the eldest son, were being educated. When we came into the hall the attendants not only of the palace but also of Mountjoy's household were all assembled. In the midst stood Prince Henry, then nine years old, and having already something of royalty in his demeanour, in which there was a certain dignity combined with singular courtesy. On his right was Margaret, almost eleven years of age, afterwards married to James, King of Scots ; and on his left played Mary, a child of four. Edmund was an infant in arms. More, with his companion Arnold, after paying his respects to the boy Henry, the same that is now King of England, presented him with some writing. For my part, not having expected anything of the sort, I had nothing to offer, but promised that on another occasion I would in some way declare my duty towards him. Meanwhile I was angry with More for not having warned me, especially as the boy sent me a little note while we were at dinner, to challenge something from my pen."⁴²

Erasmus was later on friendly terms with Sir Henry Guildford, Jane's eldest son, and in one of his letters to him in 1519 he refers to his two conversations with "the noble lady your Mother" and wishes her happiness and prosperity.⁴³

In 1500 Nicholas attended Henry VII to France for his meeting with the Archduke of Austria,⁴⁴ and he was on the Commission of the Peace for Northamptonshire in 1500, 1502 and 1504.⁴⁵ But at the turn of the century an event occurred which was to cast a shadow across the future which nobody can yet measure. In November 1501, England was agog with excitement, awaiting the arrival of Prince Arthur's bride, a young Spanish princess named Katharine of Aragon.

III.

The preparations for the reception of Katharine of Aragon found employment for most of the nobility of England, and the Vaux family was well represented.

Dame Jane Guildford and Dame Elizabeth Vaux were commanded to wait upon the Queen,⁴⁶ and Sir Nicholas was one of the knights deputed to receive the princess, when she landed at Tower Gate, by the Tower of London.⁴⁷

Actually Katharine had had enough of the sea before she reached the Channel, and landed at Plymouth. The King with Prince Arthur hastened to meet her, and on 6 November caught up with her at Dogmersfield (Hants.). The Spanish attendants had strict instructions that no meeting between the young couple was to take place till the actual day of the wedding, but King Henry brushed all prohibitions aside, penetrated into her chamber and introduced her to Arthur. Jane Guildford was there, but in what capacity is not clear.

"The King sped him to his supper and after that he had supped full courteously with the Lord Prince, visited the Lady in her own chamber, and then she and her ladies let call their minstrells and with right goodly behaviour and manner they solaced themselves with the disports of dancing, and afterwards the Lord Prince in like demeanour with the Lady Guildford danced right pleasantly and honourably."⁴⁸

The marriage took place at St. Paul's on Sunday, 14 November, amid scenes of dazzling pageantry and splendour. Lady Guildford and Sir Nicholas were there, and he was dressed with such ostentatious magnificence that it impressed even his contemporaries, in an age of unbridled extravagance :

"Wonderful it was to behold the riches of apparel worn that day, with the poissant chains of gold : of which two were especially noted . . . Also the Duke of Buckingham wore a gown wrought of needlework and set upon cloth of tissue, furred with sables, the which gown was valued at £1500. And Sir Nicholas Vaux, knight, wore a gown of purple velvet, pight with pieces of gold, so thick and massy that it was valued in gold, besides the silk and fur, a thousand pound ; which chains and garments were valued by goldsmiths of best skill, and them that wrought them."⁴⁹

According to Nicholas Sanders who wrote almost within living memory :

"That night the princes were conducted with ceremonious observances to the bridal chamber, attended by a grave matron, who remained with them by order of Henry VII, acting on the advice of the physicians ; for prince Arthur, hardly arrived at his fifteenth year, was suffering from a lingering disease, worn out by which in less than six months he departed this life."⁵⁰

The "grave matron" was perhaps Jane Guildford. Years later when Henry VIII was looking for grounds for his divorce, Jane was called upon to depose. Her evidence does not bear out Sander's account, but perhaps she felt constrained to give the sort of evidence that the King required.

"Deposition of Jane Lady Guildford, aged 60, that she was present at the marriage in St. Paul's etc. Further she saith that the self night of the day of the said solemnization this deponent was present among other ladies in a certain chamber lying within the palace of the bishop of London beside the cathedral church where and when she saw and beheld the said prince Arthur and the noble lady Katharine beforesaid lying in bed together alone and sole and in mind and intent as she believeth to have carnal cognition together as man and wife, and that she left them there both together for all night in bed sole, saluting them both at her departure from the said chamber as it appertained. And that this deponent, in the morning next following repaired again, as her office required, to the said chamber where and when she did find the said prince Arthur and the same noble lady Katharine together in bed sole, likewise as she did leave them the night before.

"And moreover she saith that she heard dame Elizabeth of noble memory, our Sovereign lord the King and the said prince Arthur his mother and the said noble lady Katharine, with many other nobles and honourable ladies divers times say and report that the said prince Arthur and lady Katharine lay together in bed as man and wife all alone ; or 6 nights after the said marriage."⁵¹

There is no doubt that Katharine's own father King Ferdinand was under the impression that they did not consummate the marriage.⁵²

The rest of the week was given up to feasts and tournaments, of which detailed descriptions have come down to us :

"The Tuesday following [16 November] the King and Queen being all this season at Bainard's Castle, came unto Paul's and heard there Mass, and then . . . went into the palace, and there dined with the princess. This day Sir Nicholas Vaux wore a collar of Esses which weighed, as the goldsmith that made it reported, 800 pound of nobles."⁵³

"Upon the Thursday, the great and large void space before Westminster Hall and the Palace was gravelled, sanded and goodly ordered [for the jousts and tilting] . . . Sir Richard Guildford, Comptroller of the King's household and Sir Nicholas Vaux were ever for the most part in the field every day of the joustes ; right goodly be seen both their horses and their raiment, with great and massy chains of gold about their necks, and by them the King's grace did send his mind and messages into the field at his goodly pleasure."⁵⁴

Five months later, in April 1502, the country was plunged into gloom by the sudden death of the delicate Prince Arthur. Sir Richard Guildford was sent to comfort the servants.⁵⁵ The tragic news was broken to the King by his confessor. The King sent for the Queen, who stifled her own sorrow in order to comfort his, pointing out that "God had left him yet a fair prince and two fair princesses."

"The King thanked her for her good comfort. After that she was departed and come to her own chamber, natural and motherly remembrance of that great loss smote her so sorrowful to the heart that those that were about her were fain to send for the King to comfort her. Then his Grace in true gentle and faithful love in good haste came and relieved her, and showed her how wise counsel she had given him before : and he for his part would thank God for his son, and would she should do in like wise."⁵⁶

It must have been a sad time for Lady Guildford as well, but none of them could foresee the momentous consequences of this death, which made Prince Henry, Duke of York, heir to the throne.

After a period of mourning the Queen returned to her normal

life and Jane continued to busy herself with the care of the two "fair princesses." And with other things too, for there is an entry in the Queen's privy-purse expenses for 1502 :

"Item the 14th day of October, to my lady Guildford, for money by her delivered to the Queen's grace at Ewelme, playing at dice—13/4d."⁵⁷

Early in 1503 the elder daughter, Princess Margaret, was espoused to James IV of Scotland, but a gloom was cast over the celebrations by the sudden death in childbirth of her mother, Queen Elizabeth, on 11 February. The younger daughter, Mary, was then only about seven, and thereafter Lady Guildford became to her almost a second mother.

Meanwhile Sir Nicholas had been adding to his responsibilities and no doubt to his wealth. On 5 November, 1501, he became Sheriff of Northamptonshire for the second time. In June, 1502, he was appointed Constable of Rockingham Castle, surveyor of vert and venison in the King's forest of Rockingham, Steward of Rockingham, Brigstock and King's Cliff, master forester and keeper of the said forest, and receiver of its profits.⁵⁸ He was also appointed keeper of the royal park at Moulton.⁵⁹

In 1505 he was on the Commission of Gaol delivery for Northamptonshire together with John Tresham, son of the Sir Thomas who had been executed at Tewkesbury. Another member of this commission was the notorious Richard Empson, of Easton Neston, who was filling the King's coffers and his own by the most unblushing extortions.⁶⁰

But the chief office that came to him, and the one which he held for the rest of his life was beyond the seas. For reasons that need not detain us here Henry VII suspected Edmund de la Pole, son of the late Duke of Suffolk of plotting a rebellion. After the marriage of Prince Arthur, which he attended, Edmund had fled for a second time to the continent. Among those accused of aiding his escape was Sir James Tyrrel, Lieutenant of Guisnes, an English stronghold near Calais. Sir James was, by some means enticed on board an English ship, leaving his son in command of the castle. Sir Thomas Lovell threatened to throw him overboard unless he sent word to his son to deliver the castle, which he did. Both father and son were sent to the Tower. Sir James was executed on 6 May, 1502,

confessing before his death, it is said, the murder of Edward V and his brother, the two little princes in the Tower.⁶¹ But it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Sir Nicholas Vaux was promoted to the high office of Lieutenant of Guisnes.

Vaux's neighbour was Sir Anthony Brown, lieutenant of the castle at Calais. Between the two families there grew a long tradition of friendship, which led eventually, though not till 1801, to an intermarriage. Both Sir Nicholas and Sir Anthony were for a time under suspicion of sympathy with the conspiracy of Edmund de la Pole. An obscure government informer named Flamank asserted that Sir Hugh Conway "had showed all this matter to Sir Nicholas Vaux, lieutenant of Guynes, and to Sir Anthony Brown, lieutenant of the castle of Calais, and said that their answer to him was, saying that they had too good sure holds to resort unto, the which should make peace, however the world turn."⁶²

But this was only a ripple that did not break the surface of the quiet water. Nicholas kept his post and his head. But others were less fortunate, and among them was Sir Thomas Green of Green's Norton, who was sent to the Tower, together with Sir George Neville, Lord Abergavenny. They were both able to prove their innocence. "But Sir Thomas Green fell sick before, and continued in the Tower in hope to be restored as well to his health as he was to his liberty, and there died."⁶³

But again, it is an ill wind . . . Nicholas' wife had recently died without bearing a son, and he was able in 1507 to marry Anne Green, daughter and heir of Sir Thomas, a girl of seventeen who had just inherited her father's huge fortune. She brought to Nicholas, besides the manor of Green's Norton, at least a dozen other estates in Northamptonshire alone, and a great deal of property in Bedfordshire and beyond.

In 1506 Sir Richard Guildford, Jane's husband, set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He took with him a chaplain who kept a journal which was afterwards printed, and of which the only known copy is now in the British Museum. It is interesting for the glimpse it gives us of the relatives of Nicholas' mother, who was daughter of Gregory Penison.

The pilgrims went overland through France and the Riviera and on "Friday the 8th day of May to Novavilla in Haußt, to Haußt and to Curtysello the same night, where we were at ease etc.

“Saturday to Alessandria, and there Sunday all day, where master Jerome and Augustine Panyson, with a great number of their worshipful parents and cousins ; which two gentlemen be nigh cousins unto master Vaux and to my lady Guildford, made great honour, feasts and cheer unto my master Guildford that might not be amended, and also stuffed us with victuals, bread, and wine in our barges. There we left our horses and took the water to Tannar.”

Thence they went to Rome, where Bramante was just beginning to build the new St. Peter's, and then by sea to Palestine. After visiting the holy places the pilgrimage ended sadly enough.

“And this same Sunday [6 September, 1506] at night, about one or two of the clock at after midnight, my master Sir Richard Guildford, whom God assoie, deceased, and was the same morning to Mount Sion afore day. And the same Monday, our Lady's eve, the Nativity, all the pilgrims came to Mount Sion, to the burying of my said Master Guildford, where was done by the friars as much solemn service as might be done for him etc., and this was the 7 day of September.”⁶⁴

Henry VII died on 22 April, 1509, having saved a considerable fortune for his son to squander, and having laid the foundations of a totalitarian régime that was to be brought to perfection by the rest of the Tudors. But Nicholas and Jane had nothing to complain of. They had risen from the depths of poverty to become the friends of the royal family. Nicholas was by now among the richest men in the kingdom. Three days after the King's death, his happiness was completed when his new young wife gave birth to a son and heir.

CHAPTER II

FOREIGN SERVICE

I

HENRY VIII succeeded to the throne on 22 April, 1509, at the age of eighteen. He was of fine physique, handsome, intelligent and popular. England looked forward to a long and prosperous reign. On 11 June he married his brother's widow, Katharine of Aragon.

Sir Nicholas Vaux continued in favour. On 6 October of that year he made a new agreement¹ with the King for the office of Lieutenant of Guisnes, that gives us many interesting particulars.

The peace-time establishment was fifty men-at-arms on foot (including the Lieutenant or his deputy on horseback), and fifty archers on foot. The Lieutenant is to be paid 2/- per day, with 50 marks per year "reward." The men-at-arms get 8d., the archers 6d. per day. In addition Vaux is to have 50 marks yearly to be used at his discretion, as well as reasonable fuel of the forest of Guisnes.

In time of war he is to have the number of soldiers that has been accustomed, and is thought reasonable by the King. The King is to have one third of the "winnings of war." Vaux is to keep all prisoners except princes, sons of princes, marshals and lieutenant-generals, captains and traitors. The men-at-arms and the archers are to be "Englishmen, born in England or Wales," but the gunners, cross-bow makers, spies, beer-brewers, armourers and smiths may be foreigners. The King is to furnish artillery, guns, and gunpowder. Vaux must give two months' notice if he wishes to resign.

By deed of 26 October, Vaux agrees to pay a total of £621 13. 4. for the lordships of Sandgate and Bavelyngham; a place called "the lytyll Graunge"; the "whetefeld" and "fotchamprie," the last two formerly held by John Windebank.

A further contract was signed on 10 November,³ with the following conditions:

THE STATE

THE STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE,
January 10, 1894.
REPORT
OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE,
IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE SENATE,
MAY 1, 1893.

ALBANY:
J. B. LEECH, STATE PRINTER,
1894.

THE LAND OFFICE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
HAS THE HONOR TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE RECEIPT OF
A COPY OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE
LAND OFFICE, IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION PASSED BY
THE SENATE, MAY 1, 1893, AND TO STATE THAT THE
SAME HAS BEEN FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF
THE SENATE, AND IS HEREBY REFERRED TO THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE FOR THEIR
CONSIDERATION.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
and the seal of the State of New York, at Albany,
this 10th day of January, 1894.

1. Vaux shall give £1,000 by instalments towards the repair of the castle.
2. In time of peace the garrison to be 60 soldiers, of whom the King shall appoint 20 and Vaux 40.
3. Vaux to pay the King 500 marks yearly towards the repairs.
4. He shall be ready to serve the King in England at all times on sufficient warning.
5. In time of war he shall furnish the garrison and be absolved from the 500 marks.
6. The King shall supply any extra forces that may be necessary.
7. Vaux shall receive by indenture all the habiliaments of war etc.
8. The contract is for twenty years.

Meanwhile further offices were falling to him in England. Empson and Dudley who had done so much to amass the fortune left by Henry VII, were now brought to trial for illegal extortions. They defended themselves with some skill and showed that their conduct, however disgraceful and unjust to the people, was within the law. When no conviction was forthcoming they were indicted on a trumped up charge of treason. There was no trustworthy evidence, but the jury found the verdict expected of them. Empson was tried at Northampton Castle on 1 August, 1509. Nicholas was one of the petty jury of nine that found him guilty.⁴ Henceforth, for the rest of the Tudor period and even later, treason was to be the most popular cry against all who opposed the will of the ruling party. The jury was to be a picturesque survival that merely gave a semblance of justice to the judicial murders. Empson was condemned to death, and executed a year later. Nicholas, on 8 November, was granted most of his offices. They comprised the stewardship of seventeen manors and lordships in Northamptonshire and three in adjacent counties.⁵ Three more fell to him in January 1510.⁶

On Sunday 27 July, 1511, he entertained the young King at Harrowden. The King made his customary offering at Mass there, namely 6/8d. The next entry in his book of payments is "3 August at Pipwell Abbey."⁷ The accounts for this reign only show where the King stayed on the Sundays.

King Henry now began to take an ever growing interest in

the affairs of Europe. In this year, 1511, he attempted the recapture of Guienne, in the south of France, but the campaign came to nought. In 1513 he landed with a larger army in northern France, captured Terouenne and Tournai and won the cavalry skirmish, grandiosely called the "Battle of the Spurs." It was here that Wolsey first distinguished himself, and Henry made him bishop of Tournai. Sir Nicholas Vaux with 100 retainers was in the "avauntgarde" which numbered 3,200,⁸ and we have our first record of him on active service.

"Upon the Monday being the 27th day of June [1513], twenty three carts charged with victuals were by the garrison of Calais conducted to Guisnes, and there the crew of the castle and town of Guisnes with three hundred foot men, under the conduct of Sir Edward Belknapp, all being in number 460 men, set forth to conduct the said victuals to the army lying before Terouenne, and so they passed to Arde. And while the carters passed the town, the horsemen fell adrinking in the way, and the foot men were all out of order.

"The duke of Vandosme, captain general of Picardy, which lay in a bushment [ambush] in the forest side of Guisnes with 800 light horsemen, took his advantage and set on the victual-lers. The carters perceiving that, loosed their horses and fled to the town, which was but a mile off, and left their carts. Sir Nicholas Vaux captain of Guisnes did all he could to bring the foot men in an order; but the Frenchmen set on so quickly that they could not set them in order. The horsemen of Guisnes which were but only 24 took their spears and joined with the Frenchmen: the archers of England which passed not 60 shot manfully, and a noble captain called Baltier de Lieu and divers other, but the Frenchmen were so many in number and in good order that they slew 8 gentlemen of the garrison of Guisnes and 30 archers slain and many hurt, and so they distrussed the victuals, and caused Sir Nicholas Vaux and Sir Edward Belknapp to fly toward Guisnes."⁹

The Chronicle of Calais estimates the English dead as three hundred, besides many prisoners.¹⁰ However, though they lost their "brede and beare" the English forces took Terouenne by storm, and the campaign was successful. Henry returned to England in time for the devastating victory of Flodden.

Desultory skirmishing continued in France for another year and Guisnes was a danger spot.

"In the month of June [1514] the Lord Pownternie, that was captain of Terouenne with banner displayed and great ordnance, with a great army came into Picardy near to Arde. Sir Nicholas Vaux, captain of Guisnes, considering that the Frenchmen had such ordnance, thought that they would have beseiged Guisnes, and wrote thereof to the King, which incontinent provided a great army for the rescue. And when everything was ready and the army forward, the Lord Pownternie raised his camp and departed without any more doing."¹¹

So much for Vaux's military record. But now Wolsey, who was at the helm, decided on a new foreign policy. He would make France an ally. Peace was signed on 6 August, 1514. To seal the alliance a marriage was negotiated between Louis XII, who had just lost his wife, and Henry's youngest sister Mary. Louis was fifty-one and Mary only seventeen, but that was a minor inconvenience, compared with the political value of an alliance with France. Sir Nicholas and his wife were among those deputed to escort the princess to France. He believed in travelling with the dignity befitting his rank and the occasion, and his idea of what was becoming was "40 horses in his train, and all with scarlet cloth."¹²

Jane also played her part in this royal marriage, and a more conspicuous part than her gorgeously dressed brother. She accompanied the young princess, whom she had brought up, as her Lady of Honour, in charge of the maids-of-honour.¹³ They crossed to Boulogne, and Louis XII met them in person at Abbeville. Thence they went to Paris where they kept the great solemnities of All Saints and All Souls, and on 3 November journeyed to St. Denis for the coronation.

"And first the queen's grace kneeled before the altar in a place prepared therefor, and there the said Cardinal of Pree anointed her and after delivered her the sceptre in her right hand and the "vierge" [wand] on the hand of Justice in her left hand, and after that he put a ring upon her finger, and fourthly he set the crown on her head, which done the said Duke of Bretagne led her up a stage made on the left side of

the altar, directly before us, where she was set in a chair under a throne, and the said Duke stood behind her holding the crown from her head to ease her of the weight thereof. And then began the high Mass sung by the said Cardinal, whereat the Queen offered, and after *agnus* she was housled, and, Mass done, she departed to the palace, and we to our lodgings, to our dinners. . . . Item Monday the 6th day of November the King departed to Paris, and the Queen departed about 9 of the clock, and dined at a village two miles out of Paris ; and at afternoon she made her entry into Paris aforesaid with great solemnity."¹⁴

That very morning like a bolt from the blue, came an order from the King for Lady Guildford, together with nearly all the English attendants, men and women, to return to England. The solitary maid-of-honour who was allowed to remain was a child of seven named Boleyn. This was either Anne Boleyn the future queen or her sister.¹⁵ The Earl of Worcester, one of the four ambassadors went at once to the King for an explanation, and wrote the same day to Wolsey.

" . . . As touching the return of my Lady Guildford, I have done to my power and in the best way that I could to the French King, and he hath answered me that his wife and he be in good and perfect love as ever any two creatures can be, and both of age to rule themselves, and not to have servants that should look to rule him or her. If his wife need counsel or to be ruled, he is able to do it ; but he was sure it was never the Queen's mind nor desire to have her again, for as soon as she came aland, and also when he was married, she began to take upon her not only to rule the Queen, but also that she [the Queen] should not come to him, but she should be with her, nor that no Lady nor Lord should speak with her but she should hear it ; and began to set a murmur and banding amongst ladies of the Court. And then he sware that there was never man that better loved his wife than he did, but ere he would have such a woman about her he had liefer do without her ; and he said that he knew well that, when the King his good and loving brother knew this his answer, he would be contented, for in no wise he would not have her about his wife.

"Also he said that he is a sickly body, and not at all times

that he would be merry with his wife, to have any strange woman with her, but one that he is well acquainted withall afore, when he durst be merry ; and that he is sure the Queen his wife is content withall, for he has set about her neither lady nor gentleman to be with her for her mistress but her servants, and to obey her commandments.

“Upon which answer, seeing he in no wise would have her, I answered him again so that he was content, and so I make no doubt but the King’s Grace would be, for the answer was well debated ere I gave it, as his Grace and you shall know at my coming, which I trust shall be shortly.

“My Lord, the French Queen told me that she loved my Lady Guildford well, but also is content that she come not, for she is in that ease that she may well be without her, for she may do what she will . . .

“Written at Saint Denis the 6th day of November.”¹⁶

How unfairly this letter represents the sentiments of the young queen is shown by her own letter to her brother, Henry VIII, written six days later.

“ . . . And now am I left post alone in effect, for on the morn next after the marriage my chamberlain with all other men servants were discharged, and in like wise my mother Guildford with other my women and maidens, except such as never had experience nor knowledge how to advertise or give me counsel in any time of need, which is to be feared more shortly than your Grace thought at the time of my departing, as my mother Guildford can more plainly show your Grace than I can write, to whom I beseech you to give credence. And if it may be by any means possible, I humbly require you to cause my said mother Guildford to repair hither to me again. For else if any chance hap other than weal, I shall not know where nor of whom to ask any good counsel, to your pleasure, nor yet to mine own profit. I marvel much that my Lord of Norfolk would at all times so lightly grant every thing at their requests here. I am well assured that when ye know the truth of everything, as my mother Guildford can show you, ye would full little have thought I should have been thus intreated: that would God my Lord of York [Wolsey] had come with me in the room of Norfolk: for then am I

sure I should have been left much more at my heart's ease than I am now . . .

"Abberville the 12th day of October [sic]

"Give credence to my 'mowder Galdeford'

By your loving
sister Mary Queen of France."¹⁷

On the same day she wrote to Wolsey.

" . . . I recommend me unto you as heartily as I can, and as she that hath not been intreated as the King and you thought I should have been, for . . . the morn next after the marriage, all my servants both men and women were discharged, inso-much that my mother Guildford was also discharged, by whom, as ye know, the King and you willed me in any wise to be counselled. But for anything I might do, in no wise might I have any grant for her abode here, which I assure you, my Lord, is much to my discomfort, beside many other discomforts that ye would full little have thought. I have not yet seen in France any lady or gentleman so necessary for me as she is, nor yet so meet to do the King my brother service as she is. And for my part, my Lord, as ye love the King my brother and me, find the means that she may in all haste come hither again, for I had as lief lose the winnings I shall have in France as to lose her counsel, when I shall lack it, which is not like long to be required, as I am sure the noblemen and gentlemen can show you more than becometh me to write in this matter.

"I pray you, my Lord, given credence further to my mother Guildford in everything concerning this matter . . ."¹⁸

Mother Guildford did not return, but the queen's miserable life, with a sickly husband three times her age, did not last long, and she promptly, on the King's death, married her real lover, Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. His uncle Sir Thomas Brandon, on his death in 1510, left his place in Southwark and his lands in Norfolk and Suffolk to Lady Guildford for her life, she to pay his nephew William Sidney 20 marks a year.¹⁹

Lady Guildford's unceremonious dismissal by the French king did not lose her the esteem of King Henry. In the next year she

received an annuity of £20 in acknowledgment of her services to the King, to his father Henry VII, to his mother Queen Elizabeth of York and to his sisters the queens of France and Scotland.²⁰ In 1515 she received an additional annuity of £40.²¹ In 1519 she was granted for life an annual gift of a tun of Gascon wine, free of all duties, out of the prizes of wines in the ports of London, Bristol and Southampton. She retained her position in the royal household, and there are several references to her receiving new year gifts from the King.²³

II

One important source of income for Tudor kings came from the sale of wardships. Any minor who succeeded to property was automatically a ward of the crown, and his wardship went to the highest bidder. Whoever bought it had control of the education and marriage of the ward, and reaped the profits of all his estates during his minority.

In July 1515 Nicholas purchased for £400 the wardship of Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir Thomas Cheney of Irthlingborough (Northants.), then a child of ten, and having enjoyed the revenues of her extensive lands for the best part of ten years, brought them all into the family by marrying her to his eldest son Thomas.²⁴ In the following year he purchased for £200 the wardship of Walter Raleigh, son and heir of Wymond Raleigh of Fyndell, Devon.²⁵

Apart from this trading in wardships there was yet another way of making quick and easy money. It was found that sheep-farming was becoming more profitable than growing crops, and all over the country, on estates lay and monastic, arable land was being turned into pasture and common lands enclosed, thereby depriving many people of their livelihood and of their pasture. One of the very few with the vision to see the appalling economic consequences of this policy was St. Thomas More. In his *Utopia* which appeared in 1516 he deals with the abuse with all his customary wit :

“The increase of pasture, by which your sheep, which are naturally mild, and easily kept in order, may be said now to devour men, and un-people not only villages but towns : for wherever it is found that the sheep of any soil yield a softer

and richer wool than ordinary, there the nobility and gentry, and even those holy men the abbots, not contented with the old rents which their farms yielded, nor thinking it enough that they, living at their ease, do no good to the public, resolve to do it hurt instead of good. They stop the course of agriculture, destroying houses and towns, reserving only the churches, and inclose grounds that they may lodge their sheep in them: as if forests and parks had swallowed up too little of the land, those worthy men turn the best inhabited places into solitudes. For when an insatiable wretch, who is a plague to his country, resolves to inclose many thousand acres of ground, the owners as well as tenants are turned out of their possessions, by tricks or by main force: or being wearied out with ill usage, they are forced to sell them.”²⁶

In this matter Nicholas was no better than his contemporaries. In a survey of 1517 he was found to have converted sixteen acres of arable land into pasture at Great Harrowden, thereby depriving two people of their work, and complaints from some of his other estates were more serious. At Stanton Barry (Bucks.) 36 acres so converted had put 40 people out of work. Altogether he was charged with converting 150 acres in various counties, thereby depriving 80 people of their livelihoods.²⁷ The Commission was quite unable to stem the tide, though the King managed to profiteer by selling pardons to those convicted. There is one such pardon, to Sir Nicholas Vaux and Anne his wife for ruins and decays to dwellings etc. in Barcote, Pokesley, Carcewell and Potcote (all in Northants.).²⁸

At the time of this survey Nicholas was Sheriff of Northamptonshire for the third time. His term of office began on 10 November 1516, when he undertook to pay into the Exchequer the sum of £40 “upon certain conditions concerning the said office of Sheriffwick”. At the end of his year he was ordered to appear in person before the barons of the Exchequer and render an account of his Sheriffwick. The day fixed was the morrow of St. Martin’s day, Thursday 12 November, 1517. He failed to appear. His name was called on the Friday and Saturday with the same result, so “according to the ancient custom and course of our said Court of Exchequer he was amerced at the sum of fifteen pounds” being one hundred shillings for each offence.

But such nuisances were not allowed to ruffle a friend of the King. By letters patent dated from Windsor 1 February, 1518, he was pardoned this fine, as well as the £40 he should have paid for the office, and the barons were ordered to allow him to appear by proxy.²⁹

From an "Account of the fees etc. paid by ships at Dover", that covers the period from June 1518 to October 1526 we get some idea of how Nicholas divided his time between Guisnes and Harrowden. Thus he crossed from Dover to Calais on the *John* with his servants on 30 October, 1518, while twenty-five of his horses crossed on the *Peter*. In the following April Dame Vaux crossed in the *John*, returning to Dover in October. Nicholas must also have come home in the autumn, though it is not mentioned, for we find him crossing again to Calais on 21 February, 1520, his wife following him in the April. He is never mentioned as travelling with his wife, though she usually follows soon after him. Generally speaking they wintered in England and spent the rest of the year at Guisnes.³⁰

Of his domestic life scarcely any record has come down to us. There is one little indication that the old friendship between the Vaux and Tresham families was still maintained. Sir Nicholas Vaux was made supervisor of the will of John Tresham of Rushton. John died in 1520, requesting "that the Abbot of Pipwell of his goodness and charity would be at my burying and sing Mass of Requiem, and to have for his labour 10/- and to every Monk of the place of Pipwell that is priest 12d., and to every novice there 4d."³¹ He was succeeded by his son Thomas, who became Grand Prior of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

III

There were few great occasions on which Sir Nicholas did not play a small but picturesque and expensive part. He was present on 15 November, 1515 at the elaborate ceremony in Westminster Abbey when Wolsey received the cardinal's hat,³² and three months later, on 20 February, 1516 he had a small office in the christening of the infant princess, afterwards queen Mary.

"From the court gate to the church door of the (Franciscan) Friars was railed and hung with arras, the way being well gravelled and strewed with rushes. At the church door was

set a house well framed of timber covered with arras, where the Princess, with her godfather and godmother abode. There she received her name Mary. Then they entered the church, which was hung with cloth of needlework garnished with precious stones and pearls. She was preceeded by a goodly sight of gentlemen and lords. Then followed the basin borne by my Lord of Devonshire, supported by Lord Herbert; the taper by the Earl of Surrey, the salt by the Marquis of Dorset, Lady Dorset bearing the chrism. The Lord Chamberlain followed, with the Lord Steward on his right. Then the canopy, borne by Sir David Owen, Sir Nicholas Vaux, Sir Thomas Aparre, and Sir Thomas Boleyn, under which was the Princess, borne by the Countess of Surrey . . .”³³

But it was nearly three years later in December 1518 that Vaux had his chance to shine, when the infant he had helped to christen was to be espoused to the Dauphin, then less than a year old. Vaux was chosen as one of four ambassadors to receive the oath of the French King, and to restore Tournai to the French for 600,000 crowns.³⁴

The other ambassadors were the Earl of Worcester (Lord Chamberlain), the Bishop of Ely and the Lord of St. Johns (Docwra). They were accompanied by Lords Edward Howard, Ferrers and Herbert, with seventy knights, including Sir Thomas Boleyn, Sir John Pechy, Sir Edward Belknapp, Vaux’s old comrade at Guisnes, Sir Richard Weston and Sir William Fitzwilliam. In addition there were above four hundred gentlemen and yeomen. They crossed to Calais “with some storms” and passed through Picardy “with great and kind entertainment in all places till they came to Paris, where they were nobly received, every man matched with a like peer.”³⁵

Vaux, being only a knight, was the least of the four, and their entertainment allowance varied according to rank. For their diets for fifty days. the Lord Chamberlain drew £166. 13. 4., the Bishop of Ely £133. 6. 8., Docwra £100. 0. 0., and Vaux a mere £50, not much more than four and a half years’ pay of one of his archers.³⁶

On 11 December they were received by the French king, Francis, who “sat on a chair covered with cloth of gold, surmounted by an ample canopy of gold brocade, having a cushion

of cloth of gold at his feet,. He was dressed in a robe of cloth of silver, figured with beautiful flowers, the lining being of Spanish herons' feathers. His doublet was of very costly cloth of gold. He wore no crown, only his usual cloth cap . . . The Lord Chamberlain was dressed in a vest of crimson satin lined with sables, and there was a richly jewelled pendant in his cap. The Bishop wore his rochet. My Lord of St. John's had a vest of black satin, and that of the captain of Guisnes was of cloth of gold lined with sables."³⁷

Sir Nicholas has left us his own account of this embassy, in a letter to his sister, Lady Guildford. It is a very long letter, and rather tedious: he had no literary gifts, and his powers of description are limited, but one can see in spite of his laborious monotony, his eye for colour and his love of pageantry.

He describes how on their entry into Paris they were met by "Monser Saynt Poll and Monser Lysk" with mumming visors on their faces, and after that a chariot all gilt with six gentlemen afore it well horsed and appointed. In the chariot were three or four ladies decked after the Italian fashion, right gorgeously and sumptuously. Then four mummers on horseback, two in yellow and blue and two in russet and blue. "And the saying was that one of the first was the King." Thus they were conducted to their lodgings all in one street nigh together, with wine and wood ready layed in. And so he goes through all the events of their stay, naming all the French noblemen and the order in which they sat, of the music and feasting, the high Mass, which was sung in right solemn manner by the "Cardenall Boyssy", and after Mass the King came forth of his "travys" and went to the high altar where he took solemn oath in the presence of the Legate followed by dinner with the bishop of Paris. The king ate off gold plates, but there is no account of what they ate, except that it was "as honorabull a soper and banket as I have seyn any duk mak in my lyfe." All through the banquet trumpettes blew with all the instruments that could be devised.

"And after that there was a disguising which the King was at himself. In which disguising there came in two desardes [conjurers] and brought between them one stock of an anvil covered over with cloth of gold, and an anvil of cloth of silver upon that, and so they two danced about it. And then one

of the desardes went forth and brought in four mummers whereof one bore a sword in his hand and a target with the arms England and the other had a sheaf of arrows and a red cross. Then came one like the pope and they four went to the anvil and with hammers beat upon it and broke the anvil. And out of that stock came a lady with a red rose in her one hand and a fleur-de-lis in the other hand. And she delivered to him that bore the arms of France the rose, and to him that bear the arms of England the fleur-de-lis. And so they kissed the rose and the fleur-de-lis and then they danced. And in their dance the Turk came amongst them. And all the four aforenamed fell upon him and destroyed him. And so the King came in with the ladies and danced.”³⁸

Among the crowd that witnessed the arrival of these ambassadors and the elaborate entertainments which followed, was an unknown and apparently unimportant Frenchman, whose vivid narrative has survived. He describes the High Mass in some detail. It was sung by the Cardinal Legate, with Cardinals as Deacon and Subdeacon. The church was hung with tapestries. The King’s “pavillion” took up so much room that the stone screen dividing the choir from the high altar was broken down. After Mass the King went to the high altar and there took a solemn oath to observe the Treaty of Alliance. Then the *Te Deum* was sung, and all the bells rang out. It finished after three o’clock. The next ten days were devoted to lavish banquets at the houses of the various prelates and nobility, finishing on 22 December with a royal banquet at the Bastille, lit by twelve hundred torches.³⁹

Vaux’s long letter was written on 18 December before the celebrations were over, and does not therefore mention this grand climax. The ambassadors presumably spent Christmas in Paris, and then went to Tournai, which they reached on 30 January. They found the soldiers much behindhand in their pay, but none the less reluctant to leave. The actual ceremony of handing over the town took place on 8 February, 1519.

“Then began the Capitaynes and Souldiours to mourne, knowing that the town should be yelded to the French King, and many a yong Gentleman and many a tall yoman wished that they had not spent their tyme there.”⁴⁰

The French on the other hand manifested their joy by breaking up the benches on which the English had been wont to sit, and using them for bonfires all over the town.⁴¹

This Treaty of Alliance raised the highest hopes, especially among the humanists. Sir Thomas More had recently joined the government and he could not quarrel with Wolsey's momentary policy of universal peace, that promised a chance for the spread of learning. Bishop Fox of Winchester wrote in the previous October :

"None Englishman gladder than I at this honourable and profitable amity . . . Undoubtedly, my Lord, God continuing it, it shall be the best deed that ever was done for the realm of England."

Erasmus wrote, in his optimism, the following May :

"I see, I see an Age truly Golden arising."⁴²

But there was trouble brewing that would make these picturesque wars seem mere family squabbles by comparison. On 31 October, 1517 Luther had launched his attack on Indulgences, and started a movement that was to tear to shreds the traditions of a thousand years, and to shatter the spiritual unity of Christendom for ever.

IV

For political reasons that need not detain us, Henry determined on a visit to the French king. It was to be one of unprecedented extravagance, befitting his royal dignity. With Sir William Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Jerningham, Vaux was given the preliminary task, that he must have found congenial, of reviewing the royal wardrobe in the Tower and making an inventory.⁴³

As the meeting was to take place near Guisnes, it was natural that Vaux should have an important part to play in the preparations. He was consequently one of the commission appointed to decide the time and exact place of the meeting, to visit Guisnes castle and neighbourhood, and prepare lodgings : to appoint the place of the jousts half way between Guisnes and Arde, to build its lists and grandstand, and, as a wise precaution, to provide fortifications. Moreover Vaux, Sir William Sandes, Sir Edward Belknapp, and Richard Gibson were charged with

the arrangement and furnishing of a palace worthy of the occasion. When the great day came Sir Nicholas was to attend upon the King, and his wife upon the Queen.⁴⁴

So Nicholas went over to Guisnes with a job after his own heart. He landed on 11 March, 1520, and work began on the 19th. Timber, too long for any ship, was lashed together and floated from Holland. More than two thousand artisans, including three hundred masons and five hundred carpenters, from England and Flanders, were employed. The walls up to eight feet were of brick and stone, the rest of wood and glass, and the roofs were of painted canvas.⁴⁵ On 26 March Vaux wrote to Wolsey giving a vivid account of the project. The King was to have three chambers greater than any in England. The largest was to be eighty-four feet by forty-two, and thirty feet high, "which is both longer and wider than the White Hall"; the second was larger than the greatest room in the palace at Bridewell. There were three such rooms for the queen and two for Wolsey, as well as a chapel. The banquet hall was to be 240 feet by 70 feet. This is about the size of the nave of Peterborough Cathedral. They were also doing some much-needed repairs to the castle at Guisnes. He was naturally a little anxious whether all this could be ready by the end of May.

On 10 April he wrote again to Wolsey, a letter full of complaints. The five hundred tons of timber from Sussex had not arrived. It looked as though they would have to choose between a chapel and a banquet hall. Richard Gibson who was to cover the roofs with seared canvas had not arrived. "It is high time his work were in hand, for it must be painted on the outside, and after curiously be garnished under with knots and batons gilt, and other devices." He wants Master Barclay the black monk and poet to "devise histories and convenient raisons to flourish the buildings and banquet house withall." This was Alexander Barclay the Benedictine monk of Ely, and translator of the *Ship of Fools*.

By 18 May the work was progressing but they were short of money. The garnishing of the canvas, in particular, was a "marvellous great charge, for the roofs be large and stately". Evidently their decoration was something the King had set his heart on. He begs Wolsey to expedite the work "that the King be not disappointed in his roofs."⁴⁶

However all was well in the end and the banquet-hall and the roofs were ready by the time the King arrived which was not till the 4th of June. Vaux's modest share in the preparations, in which he used among other things five thousand feet of glass, cost £4,079.1. 0., considerably more than double the annual revenue of the richest English monastery.⁴⁷

There are several descriptions of this monstrous window-dressing. The fullest is in the chronicle of Edward Hall, who was present. The dominant *décor* was gold. Gold was splashed wherever it would stick ; on arras, on tent-poles, on armour and weapons, on horses' trappings. Cloth of gold was hung in profusion and worn by thousands. Everybody who was anybody both of England and of France, was expected to attend. Many of the nobility on both sides pledged their entire estates in order to appear in a manner that they considered worthy of the occasion. A French writer, speaking of his own countrymen says :

"Plusieurs y porterent leurs moulins, leurs forests, et leurs prez sur leur epaules"⁴⁸ and Shakespeare makes Buckingham use the same metaphor to bemoan the English who

"Had broke their backs with laying manors on them
For this great journey."⁴⁹

Unfortunately we have no description of how Nicholas and his lady were turned out. Their nephew Sir Henry Guildford, master of the King's horse, was in attendance, leading the King's spare horse "the which horse was trapped in a Mantellet front and back place, all of fine Golde in Scifers, of devise with tasselles or cordels pendaunt : the Saddell was of the same sute and worke, so was the Hedstall and raynes".⁵⁰ We can but try to imagine the splendour of Nicholas, who would not have been outdone by the King's spare horse. Such was the wanton extravagance that history remembers as the "Field of the Cloth of Gold". It was a fitting climax to Nicholas' boundless love of magnificence.

The time will come when his family will shine with a lustre more magnificent than gold, but those days are still afar off. There was, however, one man present who already foresaw the dangers of this preoccupation with worldly vanities, which was distracting England from the things of God. It was St. Thomas More. In answer to Luther, who says he would like to throw all the relics of the true Cross where the sun would never shine

on them, and give their golden reliquaries to the poor, the great English champion says :

“How small a portion were the gold about all the pieces of Christ’s Cross, if it were compared with the gold that is quite cast away about the gildings of knives, swords, spurs, arras, and painted cloths : and as though these things could not consume gold fast enough, the gilding of posts and whole roofs, not only in the palaces of princes and great prelates, but also many right mean men’s houses. And yet among all these things could Luther spy no gold that grievously glittered in his bleared eyes, but only about the Cross of Christ.”⁵¹

V

Henry VIII’s policy was carried out by men like Wolsey and Cromwell, and the old nobility were pushed into the background, But whatever the latter thought of the King’s growing despotism and their own waning influence, it did not pay to be vocal. One of them Edward Duke of Buckingham spoke far too freely, but there is no reliable evidence that he intended any violent action against the King. He was suddenly arrested in 1521 and indicted at the Guildhall on 8 May. The charge was that he did “imagine and compass the deposition and death of the King.” Among the petty jury who found a “True Bill” against him were Sir Robert Brudenell and Sir Nicholas Vaux.⁵² He was later tried by his peers and, of course, condemned to death. After sentence he “landed at the Temple where received him Sir Nicholas Vaux and Sir William Sands, baronets, and led him through the city, who desired ever the people to pray for him, of whom some wept and lamented, and said : ‘This is the end of evil life, God forgive him. He was a proud prince : it is pity that he behaved him so against his King and liege lord, whom God preserve.’ Thus about four of the clock he was brought as a cast man to the Tower.”⁵³

Shakespeare’s account is rather different, but the short speech which he puts into the mouth of Sir Nicholas shows how well he understood the characters of his characters.

Lovell To the water side I must conduct your Grace
Then give my charge up to Sir Nicholas Vaux,
Who undertakes you to your end.

Vaux

Prepare there !

The duke is coming : see the barge be ready
 And fit it with such furniture as suits
 The greatness of his person.

But Buckingham was past caring about such niceties.

Buck

Nay, Sir Nicholas,

Let it alone ; my state now ill but mock me :
 When I came hither, I was Lord High Constable
 And Duke of Buckingham ; now poor Edward
 Bohun.⁵⁴

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Nicholas himself came under suspicion of sharing Buckingham's sympathies, and this may account for his being chosen, with refinement of cruelty, to form one of the jury and to conduct him to the Tower. Vaux afterwards gave employment to Buckingham's chaplain, Cook, who was accused of spying for the French, in the disguise of a White Friar.⁵⁵

Alas, the peace with France that had been celebrated with such expense, was short-lived. From his post at Guisnes, Vaux had to report on 10 July, 1522 that the French had assembled 2,000 horse with Swiss lanzkechts and others amounting to 10,000, with thirty cannon and a number of "flaks" or hurdles. What was more, they intended to encamp on that very field of the Cloth of Gold.⁵⁶ Fortunately Sir William Sands had sent him some habiliaments of war three weeks earlier. They consisted of a hundred bows, two hundred sheaves of arrows, two hundred pikes, lead for shot, two last of powder, one firkin of salt, one firkin of brimstone, and a barrel of coal.⁵⁷ In the September following, without any news of fighting, comes from Sands to Wolsey the laconic message :

"Sir N. Vaux lieth very sore."⁵⁸

Wolsey at once wrote to the King that Vaux was dead "or likely to die". That when last here he intended to leave the captaincy of Guisnes to his nephew Sir Henry Guildford, who will no doubt make instant suit to the King for it. Sir Thomas a Parr would probably ask for Vaux's offices in Northamptonshire.⁵⁹ But Wolsey was a little hasty, for Vaux did not die.

On 15 April Parliament assembled at Blackfriars and Sir

Thomas More was elected Speaker of the Commons. On the 18 he made his great petition for freedom of speech. On the 27 at Bridewell, Sir Arthur Plantagenet, bastard of Edward IV was created Viscount Lisle, Sir Maurice Barkley, Lieutenant of Calais made Lord Barkley, Sir William Sands, Lord Sands, and Sir Nicholas Vaux, Lord Vaux of Harrowden.⁶⁰ They were summoned by writ of the parliament,⁶¹ but it is doubtful whether Vaux ever appeared. It is doubtful whether he ever wore the robes of a baron, that would have delighted him so much. He died on 14 May only seventeen days later.

He had risen from extreme poverty to become the friend of kings. He had grown rich by the normal Tudor methods; by judicious marriages, by substituting sheep for crops, and by deftly stepping into attainted men's shoes. Such at least is the impression we get of him from the chronicles of the times, but when we turn to his will we see another side of his character. His will bears witness to his deep attachment to the Faith that was to shine so brightly in his progeny. The resistance to the coming Reformation will be sustained by the descendants of such men as Nicholas Vaux.

"I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, our Lady Saint Mary, and to the holy company of heaven, and my body to be buried in form following; that is to say, if I die in Northamptonshire, then my body to be buried at Harrowden, and if I die at London, then my body to be buried in the Blackfriars, and if I die at Guisnes, then my body to be buried in the church of Guisnes there." He left a hundred pounds to defray the cost of his funeral, and ordered all his debts to be paid. "I bequeath to the mother church of Lincoln 3/4d, to the Blackfriars in London £13/6/8d. Item I will that mine executors buy twenty vestments to be given to twenty poor churches about Harrowden and Norton. Item to the Whitefriars, Blackfriars, and Austen Friars in Northampton every of them £6/13/4d. To the Greyfriars of the same town twenty marks. Item I will that mine executors found and amortize in Much Harrowden a Chantry of one priest to sing in the parish church there, and the said priest and his successors be endowed for their salary with lands and tenements of the yearly value of eight pounds, whereof such lands as were left me by my grandfather in the town of Wellingborough and Thyndon (Finedon) shall be parcel towards the foundation of

the same chantry and he to have a competent lodging made for him and his successors, and he and they to sing for the soul of me, and the souls of my grandfather, my father, my mother, my wives, my children, and other my ancestors' souls, and all christian souls. He left his servants all his riding horses, meat and drink for a month, and a year's wages. He left his wife's best gown to the church of Greens Norton, her second gown to the church of Harrowden, and her third to the church of Boughton. All his cloth of gold and of silver, that had made him such a striking figure, was to be divided between such churches as he was patron of. After various bequests to servants, he left his second son, William, £1000 to be invested for him, "or else to purchase him a wife that may dispend two hundred marks of inheritance." His three daughters by his second marriage were to receive £500 on their marriage, and the rest of his vast fortune was left to his son and heir, Thomas.⁶²

Nicholas died in the hospital of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem in Clerkenwell,⁶³ and presumably was buried in the London Blackfriars, where his mother lay. On the morrow of his death Sir William Fitzwilliam was appointed Captain of Guisnes,⁶⁴ and before the end of the month his office of Steward of the Lordship of Colliweston had passed to a Stamford man, David Cecil, the King's serjeant-at-arms, and grandfather of the great Lord Burghley.⁶⁵

CHAPTER III

THOMAS

I.

THOMAS was only fourteen when he succeeded his father as second Baron Vaux of Harrowden. He was already married to Elizabeth Cheney one of his father's wards, and the marriage had been consummated, his wife being sixteen at the date of his succession. Besides his three half-sisters who were all grown up and married, he had three younger sisters, Margaret, Maud, and Bridget, and a small brother William. His mother had died some short time before his father, and he was left a ward in chancery. He is said to have been educated at Cambridge,¹ but his name does not occur in any College register.

The first notice we have of him is not till 1526, when he was seventeen. In the June of that year he spent a fortnight at Hunstanton with Sir Thomas L'Estrange and his wife, who was Anne Vaux, Thomas' half-sister.²

In the following July (1527), when he was but eighteen, he was chosen to accompany Wolsey on an important embassy to France. Wolsey had been commissioned by the King to negotiate a marriage between the French king and Henry's only daughter Mary, then aged eleven. Wolsey was already in the secret of the King's infatuation for Anne Boleyn and his desire to procure an annulment of his marriage with Katharine of Aragon, on the grounds that it was unlawful to marry his brother's widow, and beyond the competence of the Pope to grant a dispensation. Such an annulment would, of course, bastardize Mary, and complicate any marriage agreement. Whether or not Wolsey was commissioned to discuss the divorce project with the French king, it must have been uppermost in his mind as he set out for France.

He travelled in more than regal splendour. With him went the earl of Derby, the bishop of London, Lord Sandys the

Chamberlain, Lord Vaux and his cousin Sir Henry Guildford, and Sir Thomas More. With their servants and retainers they numbered nine hundred.³

“Then marched he forward from his owne house at Westminster through all London, over London Bridge, having before him a great number of gentlemen, three in a rank with velvet coates and the most part of them with great chaines of gold about their neckes. And all his yeomen followed him with noblemen’s and gentlemen’s servannts, all in orange tawny coates, with the cardinall’s hat, and a T and a C, for Thomas Cardinall, imbrodered upon all the coates, as well of his owne servannts, as all the rest of his gentlemen’s servannts and his sumpter mules, which were twentie or more in number. And when all his carriages and cartes and other of his traine were passed before, he rode like a cardinall very sumptuously with the rest of his traine, on his owne mule, with his spare mule and spare horse, trapped in crimson, velvet upon velvet, and gilt stirrups, following him. And before him he had his two great crosses of silver, his two great pillars of silver, the King’s broad seale of England, and his cardinall’s hat, and a gentleman carrying his *valence* (otherwise called his cloak bag) which was made of fine scarlet, altogether embrodered very richly with gold, having in it a cloake. Thus past he forth through London . . . and everie day on his journey he was thus furnished.”⁴

How Nicholas would have loved it! What his son thought of it all is not recorded, but about the views of Sir Thomas More we have no need to speculate. He had already publicly, in Parliament, poked fun at the Cardinal’s pomposity. Wolsey was coming to address the Commons on the unpopular subject of granting the King a subsidy. Should they receive him with all his attendants or with only a few? More settled the question for them.

“Masters, forasmuch as my Lord Cardinal lately laid to our charges the lightness of our tongues for things uttered out of this house, it shall not in my mind be amiss to receive him with all his pomp, with his maces, his pillars, poleaxes, his crosses, his hat, and the great seal too, to the intent that if he find the like fault in us hereafter, we may be bolder, from

ourselves to lay the blame on those that his Grace brought here with him.”⁵

But on this journey there was a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. It is unlikely that Wolsey was the only one in the secret. Thomas More must have heard something of the King's intentions and perhaps Lord Vaux heard them discussed as they rode through Kent. When the cortège reached Rochester, while everybody else lodged in the city, Wolsey stayed with the venerable Bishop Fisher and unfolded to him what was soon to be known to the whole country as the “King's secret matter”. There were three names in Rochester that day which will ever be associated with the resistance to the Reformation that was being born,—Fisher, More, and Vaux.

From Rochester they went via Canterbury to Dover, and after much delay and more pomp and ceremony they met the French king at Amiens and discussed the preliminaries of the marriage.

Five years later, in September 1532, Lord Vaux again crossed the channel, this time in the train of Henry VIII. There were in attendance the duke of Richmond (the King's illegitimate son), the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, six earls, four bishops and sixteen other peers. The dukes brought forty retainers apiece, the bishops twenty-four and the others twenty or twelve, Vaux bringing twelve.⁶ Sir Thomas More was not there. He had resigned the chancellorship in the previous May. Henry met the French king at Calais and discussed his coming breach with the pope.

Jane Lady Guildford was still employed at court, apparently as lady-in-waiting to the Queen. But alas there was no large family to receive her devoted attention. Princess Mary, born in 1516, was the only child that survived infancy. There had been three sons and two daughters, and several miscarriages. It was a sad and anxious life for Queen Katharine who knew how much the King and the country desired a son and heir, and Jane must have shared the royal sorrow. There is an entry in the privy purse on 29 December, 1531 which shows how she contrived to keep on the right side of the fickle monarch :

“Paid to a servant of mine old Lady Guildford's in reward for bringing of lamprey pies to the King's grace, 10/-.”⁷

The King replied on New Year's Day with “a garter with gold buckle and pendent.”⁸

The Lady Vaux.



By gracious permission of H.M. The Queen

ELIZABETH HIS WIFE



THOMAS LORD VAUX

But lamprey pies could not compensate him for the lack of an heir, and he still toyed with the idea of getting his marriage declared invalid by the Pope. There were plenty of subservient clergy at home to assure him that it was unlawful to marry one's brother's widow. The learned of Oxford and Cambridge found for the King, and favourable votes were collected or bought from foreign universities. Thus Richard Croke procured one hundred and ten votes for five hundred crowns. This, he writes, is nothing to what he would have done if he had been "sufficiently furnished with money." He was rewarded with the benefice of Long Buckby (Northants.).⁹

Besides the very small body of men who refused to condone the "divorce" there was one person who resisted the King with constancy and spirit. This was Queen Katharine. No arguments, blandishments or threats could induce her to give up her title of Queen. In May 1533 she was summoned to appear before Archbishop Cranmer. She ignored three successive summonses and was pronounced contumacious. Cranmer then went on to declare her marriage with Henry to be absolutely null and void. On 3 July Lord Mountjoy, her chamberlain, Sir Robert Dimmock, John Tyrell, Griffith Richards and Thomas Vaux were sent to convey the judgment to her at Ampthill. They found her lying on a pallet, as she had pricked her foot with a pin and could not stand, and was also sore annoyed with a cough. But she was as obstinate as ever, and repudiated the title of "Princess Dowager", which has been scratched out of their report, evidently by her own hand.¹⁰

This Thomas Vaux has been identified by Froude¹¹ and others as Lord Vaux but it is very unlikely. He figures in several documents but is never once given a title. He is almost certainly a member of the Vaux family of Odiham, Hampshire, and was Comptroller of the King's Household.¹² But Jane Guildford was present at this interview, for it was later suggested that she should give evidence as to what took place.¹³

There is no need here to follow the misfortunes of Queen Katharine till her death at Kimbolton and her burial at Peterborough. There is a legend that this abbey church owes its preservation from the fate of the other monastic churches to the fact that her body lay there.

If the young Lord Vaux felt any misgivings on the subject of

the divorce he kept them to himself, and, like his father before him, retained the royal favour. In 1533, when he was twenty-four, he was one of eighteen chosen by the King for a singular honour. On 30 May they all waited on the King at dinner, and afterwards, according to ancient custom, were bathed and shriven,¹⁴ and on the morrow were solemnly dubbed Knights of the Bath.¹⁵ Next day, which was Whitsunday, they assisted at the coronation of Anne Boleyn, and attended on her at dinner in Westminster Hall.¹⁶ Sir Thomas More declined to attend. In spite of the lavish expense and pageantry there was perhaps a lack of popular enthusiasm. At all events it was the last time that Henry staged a coronation; his four other queens remained uncrowned.

Nor is there any evidence of popular enthusiasm when three months later, on 7 September, the new Queen gave birth to a daughter who was to become Queen Elizabeth. In the July following John Hilsey, Prior of the Dominicans at Bristol, complains of two Franciscans, and of a sardonic joke that was going the rounds:

“When it was asked of them whether they were at the christening of the prince’s grace, and whether she was christened in cold water or else in hot, they answered that she was christened in hot water, but it was not hot enough.”¹⁷

Lord Vaux had come of age in April 1530 and was summoned to Parliament on 19 January 1531. According to Dugdale¹⁸ he actually attended, but a gap in the Journal of the Lords from 1515 to 1534 makes it impossible to trace his parliamentary career during those years. Of the seventy-five days on which Parliament met in the Spring of 1534, Vaux was present on sixteen. No session of parliament has ever done more to change the face of England.

On 26 February was introduced a bill condemning Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent, who had spoken against the divorce, and had claimed to have visions. Vaux was absent. On 3 March a bill was introduced concerning the dowry of the “Princess Katharine formerly wife of Prince Arthur”, making no mention of her ever having been queen. Vaux was again absent. He was present on 4 March for the second reading of the bill concerning the usurped authority of the Roman pontiff, and for

its third reading on the 19th. On 3 March he had debated with his peers "to learn whether it could be squared with the mind of the King that Thomas More, knight, and the others named with him in the said bill, except the Bishop of Rochester, who was seriously ill (and whose answer was known by his letter), might be brought before the King in the Star Chamber to be heard what they might be able to say for themselves." Vaux was again present on 12 March when the lords, to show their independence, threw out a bill concerning the sale of butter and cheese. But they gave the bill against Elizabeth Barton its fourth and final reading, and introduced another for the abolition of Peter's Pence. He was absent on 20 March when a bill was introduced concerning the King's marriage with Anne Boleyn. Finally he was there on the famous 30 March. The bill concerning the abrogation of the usurped authority of the Roman Pontiff was given its fourth reading, and hurriedly passed on to the Commons. In the afternoon the Lord Chancellor announced that it was the King's will that all the Lords, spiritual and temporal should don their parliamentary robes, and assemble with the Commons. The King appeared in person. It was announced that a form of oath (that had not been prescribed by the statute) was to be taken by all the lords, members of Parliament, clergy and laity, before parliament reassembled on 3 November. From the laity the King demanded a promise of allegiance simply, but from the clergy he required an additional declaration that the bishop of Rome had no more authority in England than any other foreign bishop.¹⁹

The summer was spent in administering the oath. When parliament assembled in November Lord Vaux was not there, and he never set foot again in the House of Lords for twenty years. His name continues to be given in the list of peers entitled to sit, which is affixed to each day's proceedings, in the House of Lords' Journal, but he is never marked "present". Indeed after 17 June 1536 his very name drops out altogether and is not replaced till Mary's reign, on 1 March, 1554. This is the only expression of his disagreement with much that Parliament was so cravenly passing at the command of the King, but it is eloquent enough. At the moment when the King's violent dictatorship reached its full power, when the reign of terror began, and the long stream of innocent blood began to flow,

Thomas Vaux retired altogether from political life, and took no further part in public affairs.

Elizabeth Barton and six companions had been executed at Tyburn on 20 April, 1534. Thomas More had been sent to the Tower three days earlier. On 4 May, 1535 three Carthusian priors with Richard Reynolds, a monk of Sion Abbey, and John Haile, a secular priest and vicar of Isleworth, were drawn, hanged, and quartered at Tyburn. Three more Carthusians suffered there on 19 June. The aged bishop, John Fisher, ill and nearly blind, was beheaded on Tower Hill on 22 June.

On 6 July as Sir Thomas More waited his turn in the Tower, "early in the morning came to him Sir Thomas Pope, his singular friend, on message from the King and his council, that he should before nine of the clock in the same morning suffer death."²⁰ He was the first layman to die in the cause, and the last canonized saint that England has produced.

II.

These executions sent a thrill of terror through the country. Whatever people thought of the "King's matter" they dared not speak their minds. There was as yet no clear-cut distinction between friend and foe, and there were some only too ready to curry favour with the King by reporting the slightest sign of criticism among their neighbours. Erasmus, living beyond the reach of the English law, expressed this terror in a letter of 24 August, 1535 to his friend Latonus. He had been well known in England as a friend of St. Thomas More, and now his English friends thought it safer to drop him. "My friends" he writes, "who used to honour me with letters and gifts, now out of fear neither write nor send anything, nor will they receive anything from anyone, as though a scorpion slept under every stone."²¹

In such circumstances it is not surprising that people kept their own counsel, and we cannot argue from their silence that they were all on the King's side, or were indifferent to the issues. Though the evidence that has come down to us is inevitably sparse, there is enough to show that the common people were by no means all in favour of the divorce. The following documents concerning Northamptonshire are worth giving in full.

As early as 1533 Edmund Knightley writes to Cromwell of an incident that took place on the very day Anne Boleyn was crowned.

“Please it you to be advertised of the misdemeanour of a lewd fellow called Richard Tydder, a traitor which hath been in Blisworth by the space of three months in service under one Robert Palmer, tailor. And upon Whitsunday last the said Robert discharged the said Richard Tydder out of his service and payed him his full wages, and so departed. And the same night after, the said Richard about nine of the clock break open a window in the hall of the said master, where divers garments were ready made and other cloth of his to make garments of, the hall door being fast locked, and his said old master not at home. It fortuneth one of the town to see him going in at the said window and gave knowledge to the watchman of the same town who repaired thither and took him there suspiciously and brought him towards the stocks. And upon his examination he confessed that he intended to rob his said master and one bade him beware what he said before the King’s watchmen.

“Upon this the said Richard Tydder said these words : ‘Ye be the King’s watch. The King liveth in avowtry and so hath done all the days of his life.’ He was bidden hold his peace, to the which the said Tydder answered and said that he would abide by it and bade them all bear record, and trusted that he should see the King’s head run upon the ground like a football, and these words he affirmed more nor once or twice.

“And so they conveyed him to Northampton castle where he remaineth in prison. There be divers witnesses examined before me and one master Barnard one of the justices of the peace, which testify the foresaid saying and misdemeanour to be true, that is to say, William Fyled, Olmer Glashope, Richard Denton and Robert Gate, watchman, John Carter, Edward Tewe and John Gibbes.

“Howbeit, some say he was so drunken that he knew not in the morning what he said overnight, and now what is further to be done it resteth upon the King’s highness’ pleasure, whom I beseech almighty Jhu to preserve.

“It may please you to consider that the breaking of the house that time of night to the intent to rob is burglary and felony,

for the which he ought to die ; but he is a clerk and can speak Latin and writeth very well as I am informed, and the sessions is upon Tuesday next at Northampton where most of all the justices of the peace within the shire will assemble.

“And thus almighty Jhu have you in his blessed keeping. Written at Blisworth this present Thursday in Whitsun week [1533] by your bounden

Edmund Knyghtley
Sergeant at the law”.²²

Three months later there were two scorpions sleeping under a stone at Kettering.

Certificate of Richard Pynder, mercer, and Robert Lynne, ironmonger of the parish of Kettering. 28 April 1534.

“ . . . upon our faiths for truth declare that one Sir George Clydrowe [Clitheroe] curate and parish priest of the parish church of Ketryng aforesaid under Dr. Grene parson of the said parish church and chaplain unto the right excellent princess Lady Kateryn, princess dowager, in the month of September last past, being within the dwelling house of one Richard Drayton beside the said parish church, said and openly declared in our presence as hereafter followeth, or like in effect, that is to wit, he said that it was pity that the King was not buried in his swaddling clothes, and whosoever would call the queen’s grace that now is, Queen, at Bugden [Buckden] where his said master dwelleth, his head should be knocked to the post.

“He then naming her ‘Lady Anne’ and said he trust to see her brought full low. And also he then said we should have no merry world until we had a new change. . . .

“And further he then said that men knew what the Bishop of Caunterbury was, he was an ‘hosteler’.”²³

The sequel is rather long, but it does show how widespread the discontent was, and that these unfortunate victims were representative of a considerable body of opinion. This letter is undated, and may be earlier than the certificate just given, but it is subsequent, of course, to the charges made therein.

“To the Right honorable Master Cromwell, one of the King’s most honorable Council.

"Humbly sheweth unto your mastership your orator the King's true liegeman John Chamberleyn.

"That he hath not only delivered your letters of commandment unto Pyndar and Robert Lyne of Ketyrynge but also to the King's constable there for to attach [arrest] Sir George the parish priest of Ketyrynge to appear before you and other the King's honourable council according to your said letters.

"So it is, honourable Sir, the said Pyndar and Lyne are coming. And as touching the priest it may please you to be advertised that the constable went with your said letter unto John Lane, gentleman, who opened the letter and upon the sight thereof, delivered it again to the constable. And continently upon the same the constable attached the priest. Then the said John Lane, gentleman, called the priest unto him and said: 'Sir George, care not for this matter, for I will go for thee to Mr. Montague, sergeant-at-law, either this night or tomorrow', and after these words spoken, had the priest aside and talked secretly with him, that neither the King's constable nor your said orator nor none other might hear nor know what they said, in so much that your said orator spake these words:

" 'Mr. Lane, take heed what you do, to speak so secretly with that priest for I assure you he is a traitor, and therefore it were meet that ye should take some persons near unto you to hear what you say, and not to give him counsel, but let him be examined whereas he ought to be.'

"After this the priest found surety to be forthcoming in the morning as early and when the said constable and your said orator would come for him.

"The same night there went divers of the priest's friends unto Mr. Lane late in the evening, where they took counsel among them, in such wise that when your said orator came in the morning to the constable's house, he was gone and divers other with him unto Mr. Montagewe sergeant-at-law. And so your said orator tarried that day till nine o'clock, and could neither find the constable nor yet the priest.

"Then your said orator went to one John Goldesborough's house to call Pyndar, and at that tyme the said Goldesborough spake these words:

" 'Neighbour Chamberleyne, there is many more that hath

heard the priest speak as large as you, but he shall be so borne by Master Lane and Mr. Mountegewe that all we must say as they say, and take their part. And therefore be advised and do as your neighbours do'."

"And then your said orator said that he would be glad to have their good will: howbeit, in God's cause and my prince's I dread neither of them both. And for because that your said orator according to his allegiance hath declared unto your mastership the truth of the railings of the said priest, your said orator is sore threatened and menaced, and over that, of ill will warned out of his house.

"Further it shall please you to be advertised that the same night that the said priest was attached, your said orator heard one Thomas Fish and another of his neighbours say these words

" 'Let us all stick together with a common voice, or else it would cost the priest his life.' These words was spoken as they came in the evening from the parish after they had been in their counsel.

"Humbly beseeching your mastership in consideration of the premises to be good master unto your orator, in suchwise that he may go in safety in God's peace and the King's. For he is sore menaced and threatened and like to be in danger of his life at his coming home, for doing this his duty according to his allegiance, unless than your mastership according to right and justice will see a redress therein, of the which he beseecheth, and shall daily pray for the preservation of your honour, long to endure."²⁴

The next letter shows that the murmuring went on even after the butchery had begun, for it was written on the very day that St. Thomas More went to the scaffold.

William Parr, who had been sheriff of the county when the above indiscretions occurred, writes to Cromwell on 6 July, 1535 :

"It may please your good mastership to be advertised that a priest within Northamptonshire, upon the execution of the first offenders of the monks of the Charterhouse, said that the King's highness would never leave beheading of priests so long as there was one priest in England,. And moreover at another time, said that upon the Sunday, when he should pray for the King in the church it did grudge him in his

conscience to pray or take him for head and supreme of the church, insomuch as upon such malicious insolence and lewd words he is by my kinsman Sir Thomas Griffyn Sheriff of Northamptonshire aforesaid apprehended and taken, and thereupon doth detain and keep him in safe and strait custody until such time as your mastership's pleasure be further known therein.

"Most humbly beseeching the same that by this bearer either he or I may know your good pleasure how and what we shall do with the said priest. Which notified either to him or to me we shall with all diligence and celerity accomplish and perform."²⁵

History does not record the name of this priest nor what was his fate. As far as is known there was no incumbent in Northamptonshire who was deprived or otherwise victimized at this time for his resistance to the royal supremacy. Even the outspoken rector of Kettering, Dr. William Green (who was also Canon Resident of St. Paul's) kept his living till his death in 1540.

III.

We get a glimpse of Lord Vaux's life at Harrowden from his book of accounts, kept by his steward, Robert Downall. It covers the quarter from 2 August to 28 October 1535. The household numbered forty-six persons. There were, my Lord and my Lady, followed by Mistress Maud, their first-born. Then come three gentlewomen and two laundresses; then the steward, followed by Mr. Moote the chaplain and twelve others who are designated "gentlemen". Then follow twelve yeomen, including Spring the baker and John Bing the cook. There was the inevitable "imbrotherer" or embroiderer. There were three horsekeepers, five grooms, and finally four gentlemen's servants. Out of forty-three servants only five are women.

The following "payments extraordinary" tell their own joyful tale :

Imprimis delivered to my Lord the 12 day of August	v ^s
Itm the 14th day of August to John Cowlins to buy	
ale for the nurse of my young Mr	v ^s

Itm bought at Sturbrige fair one quarter of white velvet	iii ^s iiij ^d
Itm bought at Northampton the 12th day of October for one yard and a half of white cotton	ix ^d
Itm the same day for 2 yards of flanny	xiiij ^d
Itm for Mistress Nurse's night-gown 8 yards of Keltrike	iiij ^s
Itm one yard and a half of lining for my young Mr	x ^d 26

"My young Mr" was William, third Baron Vaux. It is thus possible to fix the date of his birth between the second and fourteenth of August, 1535.

However happy he was in his home and with the birth of a son and heir, Thomas was burdened with worries. He was not strong-minded and no match for such heartless sharpers as Thomas Cromwell. Had it not been for his strong-willed and sensible wife, he might easily have parted, during these first years of his majority, with the vast fortune left him by his father.

The next three documents are undated, but they must all be prior to November 1535. The first is from Sir Arthur Darcy to Cromwell.

"Sir, it may like you to understand that as I came to my house yesternight I did meet Mr. Bawdwyn and Mr. Chumley, and they went in to my Lord Vaux his house. And surely, Sir, as I hear say, he is about to make sale of a great part of his lands, and therefore I humbly beseech you to remember me and my bargain and that others do not expel me of my right. And seeing that the King's grace did command me by credence that you should advance my bargain and right, according to the bill whereto the Lord Vaux hath set his hand too, my full trust is yet that you will have pity on my cause. And only that I were evil at ease by riding in the night, wet and cold, I would have waited on you. From Seynt Olyves.

Yours ever to command
Arthur Darcy."²⁷

Whatever this agreement was it led to a case in the Star Chamber. Vaux sued Darcy for a fraudulent bargain. Unfortunately only a small mutilated scrap of this case now remains.

The next letter shows Cromwell himself trying to get at Vaux' property. Thomas Pope writes to Cromwell :

"I went unto the Lord Vaux, intending to have proceeded to a final end with him touching the bargain and sale of the Manor of Pempole in Cornwall, according to our first communication.

"And at my repair unto him he made me answer that my Lady his wife should be with you tomorrow at the court, and declare unto your mastership his further pleasure in that behalf. Then I told him that your mastership had sent your counsel to me to devise writings for your assurance, and he said he would make me no further answer therein till my Lady his wife had spoken with you. And in communing together my Lady came to us and said she trusted that my Lord should have no such need to sell his land, and that you would not constrain my Lord her husband to sell his lands, as many other words of which, for lack of time, I cannot make relation unto your mastership.

"And I answered that you minded not to have any land or other thing of my lord her husband nor of no other person by compulsion or constraint, but that I had in your mastership's behalf made a bargain with him for the said manor for sixteen years' purchase, and brought one Duke, my lord's clerk with me, who was present with Boucher at the time my Lord Vaux was content you should have the said manor for sixteen years' purchase.

"Which Duke testified in my lady's presence that my lord Vaux was so contented and pleased. And to put her out of doubt that you neither desired to have the said lands for nothing nor to make with my lord her husband any corrupt bargain for the same, I showed your letter wherein among other things you willed me to use indifferency and to make an honest and lawfull bargain for both parties. And after the sight thereof she required me to be content and said that if my lord her husband sold the said manor to anybody you should have the preferment thereof before any other. Other answer I could get none, whereupon I declared the effect of all our communication to Thomas Polsted and Henry Polsted your servants, and required their advice in this matter, who willed me before we should proceed any further herein to advertise your mastership of my Lord Vaux's and my lady's answer in this behalf.

"Wherefore I must humbly beseech your mastership to think no slackness in me, for as I am true man I have as earnestly travailed in this matter as I should have done your mastership service herein, or in any other thing you shall command me, during my life as the most soughtfully servant you have.

"Not doubting but that you shall have the manor for he must need sell it. But now my lady's coming to town for this time hath dashed the matter. For the man is of such constancy that he would be turned in a minute of an hour from the most earnest matter that ever he was resolved in. Nevertheless I intend tomorrow in my lady's absence to speak unto my lord Vaux for the symphony of this matter, if your mastership shall think it good I so do.²⁸

Thomas Pope (he was knighted in 1537) who is here obviously Cromwell's agent, later became treasurer in the newly-established Court of Augmentation, which dealt with the spoils of the monasteries. He made a fortune and later on, under Queen Mary, spent a substantial part of it in refounding Trinity College, Oxford. He was Thomas More's "singular friend" as we have mentioned above.

Sir William Parr also brought his influence to bear on Vaux, and reports the result to Cromwell.

"Sir, since your mastership's pleasure notified unto me by my servant this bearer, my lady Vaux hath been with me, with whom I have had as earnest communication to bring your commandment to effect as I could devise. Wherein I perceive no untowardness but that by such persuasions as I have already alleged unto her she will be appliable unto the King's gracious pleasure. Notwithstanding she would make no firm promise to condescend unto the accomplishment of the premisses unless it be before the King's highness or your mastership. Wherefore if it would please your mastership to send for her and by your great wisdom to take the pain to commune with her, I trust, or else she doth greatly deceive me, she would apply herself therein according to the King's pleasure and yours. For more than I have done it neither lieth in my power nor wit to do. Therefore I only remit it to your mastership's wisdom and goodness."

William Parr²⁹.

For once Cromwell did not get his way. By deed of 10 May, 1536, the manors of Elerley, Lanyhorne, Pempoll, and Danerdake were conveyed to John Tregian upon his marriage with Susan, a kinswoman of Lord Vaux. This was Susan Crewes, second wife of John Tregian, whose grandson, Francis Tregian, suffered twenty-eight years' imprisonment for his faith.³⁰

On 19 November, 1535 Vaux bound himself by recognisances to the King, not to alienate any manors etc., without the special licence of the King,³¹ but even this did not altogether relieve the pressure, as we shall see.

In January 1536 he entered upon his one and only public office. He succeeded Sir Arthur Darcy as Governor of the Isle of Jersey, with the castle of Montorgueil, and the lordship of St. Jermain.³² In exchange he gave Darcy twelve manors and several lucrative sinecures. He also had to find fifteen sureties totalling £1000, that he would "safely and surely keep the castle of Montorgueil within the Isle of Jersey to the use and behoof of the king . . . against all people whatsoever", and deliver it again to the king when commanded.³³ He kept the office only till 11 August, and then sold it to Edward Seymour, Viscount Beauchamp, (afterwards Protector Somerset) for £150.³⁴ Seymour was at this time of some importance as his sister Jane was perched precariously on the throne. Anne Boleyn had lost her head the previous May.

On 28 April, 1536, Vaux wrote to Cromwell in the cringing language that everyone used:

"Syr, I humbely requyre you to be goode unto me. I haue as I perceue a grett many mo foes then frendes, & am lyke, your goodnesse resarved, to be trodon under the feete & to be made a slave. Yff may plesse yow to take no dysplesure with thys my bold wrytyng, but contynew styll my goode master, and thus oure Lord Have yow in hys kepyng, from Haddlow the xxviiij day of apryll, by the rude hand

of yours as I am bonde

Thomas Harowden"³⁵

In 1536 a private act of Parliament was passed to ensure the ointure of Lady Vaux and prevent any further sale of Vaux's lands. It refers to the marriage settlement of Nicholas Lord

Vaux and Elizabeth Cheney, in which the manor of Green's Norton, among others, was assured to her for life. This manor having been sold to Sir Arthur Darcy now belongs to the King "by act of Parliament and otherwise". The King's highness is now contented that it be enacted by his royal assent and by the assent of his lords spiritual and temporal, and the Commons, that the said Thomas Lord Harrowden and Elizabeth his wife shall have the manors and lordships etc., of Great and Little Harrowden, Cransley, Wilby, Harpole, Boughton, Brampton, Pitsford, Doddington, Houghton, Flore, Middleton, Burton Latimer, Orlingbury, Mears Ashby, Pytchley and Isham, in Northamptonshire, Clopham, Okeley, Carleton, Chillington and Bromeham, in Bedfordshire, Shankton and Hardwick, in Leicestershire, Lindley (Herts.) and Foxgrove (Kent) with remainder, after their deaths, to William Lord Vaux, now son and heir.

"And where Thomas Lord Vaux has bound himself by recognizance to the King not to alienate any manors etc., without the King's special licence, and yet nevertheless divers persons having knowledge of the said recognisance, . . . have bargained and bought of the said Lord Harrowden divers of the said manors . . . upon condition that the King's highness should be contented, or else the same bargains to be void, the King's Majesty, declaring that he is not contented therewith, is pleased that it be enacted by authority of this present parliament, that all and singular bargains etc., shall immediately after the death of the now Lord Harrowden be clearly void and of none effect. Provided there be nothing prejudicial to Sr William Parre, for one annuity of £40 which William Parre claims, by reason of a grant made to him by the said Thomas Vaux now Lord Harrowden."³⁶

Thus some at least of the Vaux manors were tied up and saved from alienation.

IV.

Having made himself supreme head of the Church of England, Henry VIII set to work to gather into his coffers the wealth of the monasteries. He began modestly enough with the lesser monasteries. By a curious coincidence parliament discovered that all the religious houses with a yearly revenue of less than

£200 were sinks of iniquity, while highly commending "the great and solemn monasteries of this realm, wherein, thanks be to God, religion is right well kept and observed."³⁷

In 1535 his vice-regent Thomas Cromwell appointed commissioners to collect evidence against the smaller houses. Their technique was not new. It had been used with great effect by pope Clement V in 1307 in order to suppress the Knights Templars.³⁸ It consisted in persuading individual members, by threats and promises to accuse themselves of the most heinous crimes, and then to use their confessions to demonstrate to the world that the institution was utterly corrupt and fit only to be suppressed.

The commissioners found all that the King could desire. "Free" confessions of crimes, natural and unnatural, were forthcoming and may still be read in the State Papers. To prevent the religious carting off the church treasures, and to force them to petition the King or Cromwell every time they wished to go out, the commissioners imposed a rule of enclosure on them all that was stricter than that observed even by the Carthusians. This was a hardship not only for the religious but also for some of the laity who found the monasteries havens of peace and prayer away from the turmoil of the world, and who were now as rigorously kept out, as the monks were kept in. One such person was Lady Guildford. She had by now grown old in the royal service, and at the age of seventy or thereabouts was looking forward to the tranquility of a house of prayer. She retired to the Hospital of St. Mark in Bristol, known as "the Gaunts", the chapel of which is now the Lord Mayor's chapel. In a letter, written to Cromwell in September 1535, she thus bewails her lot :

"A suit I have now unto you by reason of certain Injunctions that I understand are given to the Master of the Gaunts in Bristol, that no woman shall come within the precincts of the same, where I have a lodging most meetest I have chosen for a poor widow to serve God now in my old days. And I trust both for myself and for my woman, like as we have done hitherto, to be of such governance, and with your licence to the same, that no inconvenience shall ensue thereof.

"And where hereto before I have used from my house to go

the next [nearest] way to the church for my ease, through the cloister of the same house to a chapel that I have within the choir of the same, I shall be content from henceforth, if it shall so seem convenient unto you, to forbear that, and to resort to the common place, like as others do, of the same church.

“Furthermore most hearty desiring you, as much as it shall become me in this case to be a suitor, to licence the master of the house with a chaplain to go abroad to see for the common weal of the same, like as I hear say of your goodness that have done to others, for whom, like as for myself, upon my credit I shall be bound unto you.³⁹

History does not record what reply she received, but it matters little. The hospital was suppressed in the following year and Jane cut adrift. There are references to two other letters⁴⁰ of hers to Cromwell in 1536, vainly interceding on behalf of St. Mary Magdalen's, Bristol, but there were to be no exceptions, and Jane took up her residence in her own lodging within the precincts of the London Blackfriars. The actual suppression of the lesser religious houses began in 1536 but of course took some years to accomplish. Of the thirty or more houses in Northamptonshire (ten of which were in Northampton) only the abbeys of Peterborough, Pipewell and Sulby and St. Andrew's Priory, Northampton, had sufficient revenue to be classed as houses of right good observance. The rest were emptied, sold piecemeal, stripped of their lead and left to the ravages of time.

Most of the landed gentry, including Sir Thomas Tresham,⁴¹ were in the scramble, but Lord Vaux received no share of the loot. He seems at this time to have kept well in the background, and his name scarcely ever occurs in the documents that have come down to us.

In Northamptonshire not a single voice seems to have been raised in protest at this great spoliation, but in the north the smouldering resentment of the commons burst into flames in the spring of 1537. The King summoned his loyal subjects to meet him at Northampton, but the Pilgrimage of Grace was suppressed without any fighting. The rebels disbanded on the royal promise that their grievances would be redressed, and then they were dealt with true Tudor fashion. Scores were hanged

on the spot, and the leaders carried to London to die the death of traitors. Vaux was not implicated, but he must have known one of the insurgents, John, Lord Lumley, who had married Jane Knightley of Fawsley, Vaux being one of his trustees.⁴²

The Pilgrimage of Grace was made the excuse for suppressing the greater abbeys as well, and by the end of 1539 the only religious house remaining in Northamptonshire was the College of Fotheringhay, which was not suppressed till the next reign.

Jane Guildford died on Wednesday 4 September, 1538. On the Friday her cousin Girolamo Penison, whom she had appointed one of her executors got busy. Even before the funeral he was engaged in estimating her wealth. He states that there was no inventory, but that her money, plate and jewels would fetch over 1,200 marks. He complains that she has made a will "with great legacies in it". "After her burial", he writes to Cromwell, "we shall take an inventory of the whole house, when I trust your lordship will be near unto these parts." The letter is written from Blackfriars in London.⁴³

She was buried on 9 September at 3 p.m. "not altogether without such pomp as might give matter of misuse to others. Yet she, dying very meek and repentant, partly desired the contrary, as shown by the copy of her testament herewith sent".⁴⁴

Her will is dated 30 August. She desires to be buried within the Blackfriars in London (where her mother and brother lay) leaving the convent £20 to pray for her soul, the souls of her two husbands, for Sir Thomas Brandon, Sir Henry Guildford (her son), for [Nicholas] Lord Vaux, Margaret Babington and Alborowe Bachelor, and for all Christians souls.

"And my will and mind is that no pomp be had at my burial but only Masses, dirges and good prayers."

She left £10 to be distributed among poor householders and poor people in London at the time of her burial; £40 to the poor of London; £40 to prison houses thereabouts; £5, a whole year's wage and mourning to each male servant, as well as a black gown, a feather bed, a boulder and a pair of sheets. To the women she left £5, a feather bed and 13 month's wages.

"To my niece Bridget Walsh £20. And to my nephew the Lord Vaux £20 and my book of French, with my hanging of tapestry that hath his arms, and with the carpet of needlework

that hath my arms in the midst. Also I give and bequeath unto my old servant Oliver Catesby £20, and to Sir George Morlande my chaplain £20 and to William Barbor my servant 20 nobles, to each of them a gelding or 40/- for a gelding."

There are numerous other bequests to servants, and still more in a codicil, including

"To Maud my fool 40/-. To my niece Bridget Walsh one of my French beds with spars, and all that belongeth thereto, with covering of needlework that I made myself."

"To my Lady Kingston my beads of corral gaudied with gold, and a pomander of gold."⁴⁵

Her executors were Sir John Gage and her cousin Sir William Penison, and she appointed the Lord Privy Seal (Thomas Cromwell) overseer, leaving him a crucifix of gold with precious stones. Doubtless he was able to convert it into something useful, before he followed his many victims to the block a year later, and left all his ill-gotten wealth behind him.

Jane was one of the last people of note to be buried in the famous London convent of the Blackfriars, where queen Eleanor's heart was buried, where Henry VI's murdered body rested awhile when Jane was a baby, and where the divorce proceedings against queen Katharine had so recently been conducted. A year later the friars were driven out, the great church destroyed, part of the convent turned into a herring store, part later used by Shakespeare, and all of it now only a memory and a name.

There is only one reference to Lord Vaux during the rest of the King's long reign. In 1546 he sues Nicholas Rand, ex-mayor of Northampton, and Anthony Brian, in the Court of Augmentations for the return of a thousand ewes at Green's Norton, leased to them twelve years before. They refuse to deliver, alleging that they have been ordered by some of the chief officers of that court to make stay; that the King had purchased Green's Norton in the meantime, and the ewes should be kept for his use.⁴⁶ How this case was settled we are not told, but we can guess.

Henry VIII died on 29 January, 1547, having squandered the fortune left him by his father, a second amassed by the plunder of the monasteries, and a third engineered by debasing the currency. He left a small minority of excessively rich people, of

whom Vaux was one, and a huge majority that lived in greater distress than ever before. He left a name that has not improved with time. He bequeathed to his successors all the degrading machinery of totalitarian rule. England itself was now paying the penalty for years of religious apathy; it was cut off from the spiritual unity of Europe; its religious and cultural life was at a low ebb; its greatest architectural treasures a welter of ruins.

CHAPTER IV

A POET AMID THE RUINS

I.

ON the death of Henry VIII, his only son Edward, a sickly little boy of nine, became king and supreme head of the Church. Under Somerset, the Lord Protector and later under Northumberland, the policy of sacrilege and loot was continued and extended. The suppression of colleges, chantries and free chapels had been decreed in 1545, but it would seem that the actual seizure of their plate and ornaments did not take place till early in the new reign. The Greyfriars Chronicle records what happened, particularly in London.

On 5 September, 1547 "began the King's visitation of Paul's, and all images pulled down; . . . and after that in divers parish churches, and so all images pulled down through all England at that time, and all churches white-limed and the commandments written on the walls. Item at this time was pulled up all the tombs, great stones, all the altars, . . . At the same time was pulled down through all the King's dominion in every church, all roods with all images. Item after Easter began the service in English and also Strand church also pulled down to make the protector duke of Somerset's place larger. Item this year was all the chantries put down."¹

Soon it was the turn of the parish churches to be denuded of all that had a commercial value. On 3 March, 1551 it was ordered by the Privy Council

"that forasmuch as the King's Majesty hath need presently of a mass of money, therefore Commissions should be addressed into all shires of England to take into the King's hands such church plate as remaineth, to be employed unto his highness' use."²

A Commission to make inventories and to put a stop to private plundering was issued on 16 May, 1552. The Commissioners for Northamptonshire were Richard Wake and Francis Morgan.

Most of their inventories have perished, but there are still extant a few, covering parishes in the hundreds of Cleley, Guilsborough, Spelhoe and Wymersley. As the inventory of Harrowden is lost, an appendix gives that of Moulton, which, as Leland tells us, "longgid a late to the Lord Vaulx, now to the King".³ It gives us some idea of the treasures of our village churches in 1552.

Many of these inventories⁴ have "memoranda" which reveal how little these objects were now prized by the "whole parish". At Spratton "one of the foresaid towels [communion cloths] was given to our parish priest to wrap about his leg, being broken, who departed and was buried with the same." At Overstone

"one chalice sold by the consent of the whole parish, weighing 7 ozs. and one cope of green damask, for the sum of £3. 6. 8., which was employed to these uses following :

"First for white-liming the church and setting up of Scripture there 26/8. Item for the repairing of the leads 3/4, for one bell whole and for trussing of the roof 10/- ; for making of 3 bridges and repairing the highways on both sides the bridges 40/-. Sum of the whole charge £4."

It was adding insult to injury to sell the chalice in order to buy lime to blot out the wall-paintings, but nobody seems to have minded.

The commonest colour for vestments was blue. Only at Kingsthorpe is there mention of a "black vestment of Requiem". At Abington there was a vestment of "black taffa". There seems to have been very little metalwork. At Weston Favell there is mention of a "pair of censors of brass" and a cross of copper. At Great Houghton there was a cross of copper and gilt and also "two head pieces used in time past for holy water yet standing in stone, the weight of one hundred pounds." There were by this date very few pictures left. At Great Houghton there was a "cope of violet velvet with a border and flowers embroidered with sewing silk and gold, also with an image of our Lady embroidered in the middle thereof." There was also "one linen cloth of blue colour and depainted therein a picture of the chalice, gold silk, which cloth now is used to lay upon corpses at their burials, with a fringe upon the same." Great Houghton church was purged of popery with a thoroughness

that would satisfy the most fastidious : there remain now only a few grass mounds.

The returns to his majesty's jewel-house for 1551-2 are far from complete, but they cover a wider area than the inventories. What appears to be a general summary of proceeds from the eastern half of Northamptonshire, gives :

"Ready money £276. 9. 8. delivered to Sir Edmund Peckham.

"Plate. 939 oz. delivered to Sir Francis Jobson, Knight.

"Ornaments of Cloth of Tissue 16 pairs delivered to Arthur Stourton Esq."

Robert Mays and Thomas Wright of Higham Ferrers certify that they have sold for £20 "certain plate belonging to the said church", and submit bills to show that they have expended £23 on the repair of their church and bridges, and there are similar accounts from Chelveston and Irthlingborough.⁵ The largest amount of loot, however, came in as broken plate, and the details are given in Appendix E.

With these external improvements there went a liturgical reform as drastic as that under Henry VIII. The first Prayer Book appeared in 1549, the second in 1552, and thenceforth the language of all services was to be English and the content essentially Protestant.

What Lord Vaux thought of all these changes is not known. His name scarcely ever occurs during the six and a half years of this reign. He was present in 1549 at a religious disputation held at Cambridge in the presence of the King, then aged eleven.⁶ He was on the Commission for collecting lay subsidies in his own county in 1551,⁷ and beyond that we know nothing of his life. He probably lived quietly at Harrowden, writing his plaintive songs and singing them to his friends, thus keeping his head on his shoulders and his hands clean.

II.

Edward VI died on 6 July, 1553 and the country was divided as to his successor. The Protestants, still a minority, were for Lady Jane Gray. She had married Guildford Dudley, grandson of old Lady Guildford, and the Dudleys had espoused the Reformers. The Catholics naturally preferred Mary Tudor,

daughter of Katharine of Aragon, especially as she had, throughout her brother's reign, shown herself to be a staunch Catholic. Northamptonshire was divided. The Sheriff Sir Thomas Cave supported Lady Jane, and ordered Sir Thomas Tresham to muster and go to her aid. Tresham refused and rode off to Northampton to proclaim Mary.

"Great stir in Northamptonshire about proclaiming of her [Mary]. Yesterday [18 July] at Northampton, Sir Thomas Tresham proclaimed her with the aid and help of the town, being borne amongst them whether he would or not. Sir Nicholas Throckmorton being present, withstanding him to his power, was driven for safety of his life to take a house, and so being borne amongst divers gentlemen escaped with much ado. The inhabitants would have killed him very fain."⁸

Throckmorton was one of the large family of Coughton, and first cousin to Thomas Lord Vaux. His opposition soon cooled and later in the month he and Tresham, escorted by six horsemen in coats of red and white, waited on the Queen to conduct her in triumph to London.⁹ He was arraigned for treason, but pleaded his course with success, became a trusted servant of the Queen and was for a time her ambassador in France.

At once Lord Vaux returned to public life. He was present at the coronation at Westminster on 1 October¹⁰, and on 1 March, 1554 his name is replaced on the list of those entitled to sit in the Lords, though he is not marked present until 7 April. After that he attended fairly regularly till December 1555, and he was on the Commission of the Peace for Northamptonshire in February 1554.¹¹

Mary's first business was to reverse the religious policy of her brother's reign. Bishops Gardiner and Bonner were released from prison, and Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley took their places. Parliament met on 5 October, and among other things, restored the ancient Canon Law.¹² Married clergy were all to be deprived of their livings, and if they put away their wives and were penitent, they were then to be recommended to other dioceses.¹³ The number thus deprived varied enormously from county to county. In the diocese of Gloucester fifty-four were deprived in one year;¹⁴ in Staffordshire only three out of some seventy.¹⁵ In Northamptonshire, out of nearly 250, thirty were deprived.¹⁶ It may be

assumed that most of these were for marriage, but not all. Only two are known to have been married at this date, William Muscott, rector of Abington, and Laurence Cash, rector of Bulwick. The latter must have put away his wife at once, for he was soon instituted vicar of Lilford. When Elizabeth reversed the policy again he was not only restored to Bulwick but summoned to resume marital relations with Alice his wife, on pain of deprivation.¹⁷ Thomas Burton, vicar of Desborough was deprived and immediately instituted to Clipston, but there is no evidence that he was married. Others may have gone to other dioceses, where it is well nigh impossible to trace them. Of the thirty deprived for one cause or another, twelve were reinstated by Elizabeth. Of these, six are known to have married prior to November 1561, and four were still unmarried at that date.¹⁸ The impression that the clergy, secular and regular were groaning under the restraints of celibacy and straining at the leash is not borne out by the facts. Clerical marriage was legalized in 1544, yet at the end of 1561, while in the Arch-deaconry of London over half were married, in Northamptonshire only twenty-six out of 250 are given as married, and only two out of thirty-five in Rutland.¹⁹

There must have been some sort of judicial process, and decree of deprivation, and, indeed, a few, mostly concerning the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, are preserved among the papers of John Foxe.²⁰ But for the diocese of Peterborough the only document I have found is a copy of the citation, dated 12 March, 1554, of Griffin Jones and Richard Hawe, two ex-monks of Peterborough who had become minor canons there and were deprived for marriage.²¹ For the remainder the only indication of the date of deprivation is the date of institution of the successor. Twenty-six were deprived before the end of 1554 and the other four in 1555. The latest date is 22 December, 1555 when a successor was instituted to James Ingram *alias* Ryder, rector of Little Oakley, who was deprived for non-residence.

England was solemnly reconciled to the Holy See in November 1554, and on 1 March, 1555 John Chambers, the last abbot and first bishop of Peterborough, confessed his apostacy to a priest, swore his orthodoxy before Gilbert Bourn, bishop of Bath and Wells, and humbly notified the same to Cardinal Pole.²² Whether he would have changed his allegiance again under Elizabeth he

was not given a chance of showing, as he died on 7 February of the next year.

On that day, Cardinal Pole issued some admirable decrees for the reformation of the clergy.

"It is yet found", he says, "that this great abuse is prevalent among them, that many of them, not residing on the cures entrusted to them, leave them to stipendaries, which circumstance has been the cause of almost all the evils in the Church."

Prebendaries with an income of £10 must reside one month in each year: those of £20 must reside two months. The penalty was forfeiture of one sixth of the income. Pluralists are given two months to resign all but one of their livings; otherwise they are to be deprived of all. The clergy are to give a good example of life "which is a kind of preaching". They are to wear the clerical dress with tonsure, and not to have more than three or four kinds of meat at a meal.²³

But it was one thing to make regulations and another to enforce them. There seems to have been little serious effort exerted by the Queen or her responsible ministers. Dean Boxall, for instance, who was her Secretary of State, was dean of Peterborough, Windsor, Chichester, Wolverhampton, and Norwich; Canon of Ely, St. Paul's, Sarum and Winchester; Archdeacon of Ely; warden of New College, Winchester; Prebend of Graham North; and rector of Bishop's Hatfield, Bolton Percy (Yorks) and Overton (Southampton). The presentation to most of these was made by the Queen, and he seems to have held them simultaneously. Similarly Doctor William Tresham was not only Vice-chancellor of Oxford, but canon of Christ Church, Ely, and Lincoln, Chancellor of Chichester, rector of Towcester, Bugbrook and Green's Norton, and vicar of Bampton (Oxon). Of course there were dispensations to legalize this abuse, but abuse it remained, and to it Pole rightly ascribed almost all the evils in the Church.

But if there was no serious attempt at reform there was a good deal of zeal against heretics. The victims were now the opponents of papal authority and Mary chose to burn them as heretics rather than butcher them as traitors. Most of them were simple folk who had learnt their heresy from the very bishops who were now their judges. This has made her memory more odious than that of her father who built up the totalitarian technique,

or of her sister who brought it to perfection. The evil was inherent, less in the religious principles of either party, than in the system.

There was one victim put to death in Northamptonshire, a shoemaker of Syresham named John Kurd. It is a pity that so little is known of this humble Protestant martyr. Our information about him is derived exclusively from John Foxe, who is not the most reliable of historians. He first records his death, but without giving his name, as occurring in October 1556.²⁴ Later on he writes :

“In the story before we something touched of a certain shoemaker suffering at Northampton, being unnamed, whom, because we understand by a letter sent from the said parties, that he suffered in this year 1557, and in the month of September [the margin has September 20th], therefore we thought here to place him. His name was John Kurde, a shoemaker, late of the parish of Syresham, who was imprisoned in Northampton castle for denying the popish transubstantiation, for the which cause William Binsley, bachelor of law and chancellor unto the bishop of Peterborough, and now archdeacon of Northampton, did pronounce sentence of death against the said Kurde, in the church of All Saints in Northampton, in August anno 1557. And in September following, at the commandment of Sir Thomas Tresham, sheriff then of the shire, he was led by his officers without the north gate of Northampton and in the stone pits was burnt.”²⁵

Now Sir Thomas Tresham was not sheriff in September 1557 : he had finished his year in office on 13 November, 1556. Hence it looks as though Foxe's original date of 1556 is nearer the truth. But if we accept the earlier date, we are faced with the further difficulty that between 7 February, 1556 and 15 August, 1557 there was no bishop of Peterborough. In the absence of any other reference in contemporary documents, the matter must be left in this unsatisfactory state.

The only other victim of Mary's persecution in this county was George Zouch, son of Sir John Zouch, who was a younger son of Lord Zouch of Harringworth. He “had his days cut off and his virtuous life shortened by the Marian persecution, for Official Woodcock of Derbyshire sent out process for Mr. Zouch,

notwithstanding his age, imbecillity and worship, so that he was (to save life) compelled to flee to his lordship of Benefield, taking Sandford's house, which had too strait room for his family, whereby he could not have his accustomed order of diet that he had at Codner, which was once a week . . . to sweat, standing by the fireside, with warm sheets holden at his back."²⁶ Queen Mary would have provided a fire.

In 1556 England was visited by widespread drought which led to plague. In the summer fevers prevailed, followed in winter by quartan agues that generally proved fatal to those already weakened by fever. The death-roll reached its highest in 1557.

"About August the fevers raged again in such manner as never plague or pestilence, I think, killed a greater number. If the people of the realm had been divided into four parts, certainly three parts out of those four should have been found sick . . . In some shires no gentleman almost escaped, but either himself or his wife or both were sick, and very many died . . . In most poor men's houses the master, dame, and servants were all sick in such manner that one could not help another."²⁷

Lord Vaux was one of the first victims. He died in the middle of October 1556.²⁸ His wife died on 20 November,²⁹ so perhaps she too was a victim of the plague. Machyn the diarist and undertaker has recorded the funeral of Lord Vaux, but his manuscript is mutilated and the date of burial is torn off. The entries immediately before and after are the 8 and 18 of October.³⁰

There are two drawings of him by Holbein in the royal collection at Windsor. There is also a small portrait on wood by Holbein, which is supposed to be Lord Vaux, but the identification is by no means certain. It was formerly in the collection of Sir John Ramsden at Bulstrode, but in 1917 it had to be sacrificed to pay death duties, and it is now in the Deutsches Museum in Berlin.³¹

III.

Compared with his father's gay and picturesque career, Thomas' was uneventful. It reflected the disappearance of colour and gaiety which followed the spread of Calvinism, whose grimness was so faithfully symbolized in the newly-plundered, lime-washed

churches. But it is not as a political figure, but as a poet and songster that he has won a niche among the worthies of England.

There is no evidence that any of his poems were published in his lifetime, but soon after his death two (nos. 8 and 9) appeared in *Songes and Sonettes*, a miscellany first printed by Totell in 1557 and often named after him. It reached its eighth edition in 1587 and long remained popular.³² As Slender says :

“I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of Songs and Sonnets here.”³³

Fifteen poems ascribed to Vaux in one or other edition appeared in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, first published in 1576. This too was very popular, reached its tenth edition in 1606, and has been reprinted several times since. There are modern critical editions of both these books by Hyder Edward Rollins. Fifteen of Vaux's poems were privately printed by Grosart in 1872,³⁴ and nine are reprinted in an Appendix. No. 10 is added on the authority of the first edition of the *Paradise*, and 11 and 12 on less satisfactory evidence. Five are given in *Recusant Poets*.³⁵

The Elizabethans paid him the compliment of imitating his poems. There are several imitations of the *Assault of Cupid*, and the tune was borrowed for a poem beginning

Pass forth in doleful dumps my verse
Thy master's heavy haps unfold.

This undistinguished poem appeared in *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, published about 1578.³⁶ An obvious imitation of no. 3 was printed in *Sir Clyomom and Sir Clamydes* in 1599.³⁷ Finally no. 9, which reappeared in 1564 as a broadsheet with the title *An Aged Lover renownceth Love*,³⁸ has been parodied and immortalized by the first Gravedigger in *Hamlet*.³⁹

It would not be very profitable to give here the views of literary critics as to the merits of these poems, but mention may be made of two critics who wrote before his work was overshadowed by the towering genius of Shakespeare. In his edition of John Skelton's works, published in 1568, Thomas Churchyard writes :

Piers Plowman was full plaine
And Chaucer's spreet was great ;
Earl Surrey had a goodly vayne,
Lord Vauxe the marke did beat.⁴⁰

George Puttenham in his *Arte of English Poesie*, published in 1589, says :

“The Lord Vaux his commendation lyeth chiefly in the facilitie of his meetre, and the aptnesse of his descriptions such as he taketh upon him to make, wherein he sheweth the counterfait action very lively and pleasantly.”

He finds this “counterfeit action” i.e. imagery, particularly pleasing in the *Assault of Cupid* :

“In this figure the Lord Nicholas [sic] Vaux, a noble gentleman and much delighted in vulgar making [i.e. vernacular poems], and a man otherwise of no great learning, but having herein a marvellous facilitie, made a dittie representing the Battayle and Assault of Cupide so excellently well, as for the gallant and propre application of his fiction in every part, I cannot choose but set downe the greatest part of his ditty, for in truth it cannot be amended.”

I think it will be agreed that, while his thoughts are not profound and his images are often commonplace, there are in these poems a smoothness and polish which are rare at this period. But it is surely as a songster as well as a poet that his contemporaries listened to him, and without the haunting old melodies, which have not come down to us, it is impossible to assess his merits. It is a song and not a poem that the Grave-digger burlesques, eloquent testimony to his popularity fifty years after his death.

Only the *Assault of Cupid* has the note of gaiety. All the others breathe a melancholy that harmonises more with the destruction of the old religion than the foundation of the new. His constant preoccupation with the vanity of worldly riches and with the thought of death and judgment, is more in line with Thomas More than with Thomas Cranmer or Thomas Cromwell. He is one of the old Catholic nobility, deeply disturbed by the prevailing religious chaos, and singing in the midst of the ruins.

CHAPTER V

THE BACKGROUND

I.

QUEEN ELIZABETH ascended the throne on 17 November 1558. She had practised as a Catholic in Mary's reign, but she soon showed, even before Parliament met, where her sympathies lay. It had been the custom for a thousand years or more for the sovereign to go in solemn state to the altar rails at the Offertory of the Mass and make an offering of gold. The offering was usually a half-angel on ordinary days and an angel on Sundays and feast days, with perhaps more on the greater feasts. Six weeks after her ascension came that loveliest of all Feasts, the Birthday of Christ.

"Yesterday", writes Sir William Fitzwilliam, "being Christmas Day, the Queen's Majesty repaired to her great closet, with her nobles and ladies, as hath been accustomed in such high feasts; and she perceiving a bishop [Oglethorpe of Carlisle] preparing himself to Mass all in the old form, she tarried there until the Gospel was done. And when the people looked for her to have offered, according to the old fashion, she with her nobles returned again from the closet and the Mass unto her privy chamber, which was strange unto divers."¹

With this symbolic gesture the young queen turned her back on the religion of all her ancestors and of the majority of her subjects.

Parliament began on 25 January 1559. Despite the opposition of the bishops the Act of Supremacy was passed, renouncing all papal jurisdiction and making the queen "the only Supreme Governor" of the Church. "Governor" was deemed less offensive to Catholics than her father's title of "Head", but it made no practical difference. The new Act of Uniformity abolished the Mass and restored, more or less, the second Prayer Book of 1552. This was acceptable neither to Catholics nor to the extreme Protestants. It was indeed the religion of nobody imposed upon everybody.

THE EAST INDIES

1

On the 15th of January, 1601, the first of the
 ships of the East India Company, the *Red Dragon*,
 sailed from London for the East Indies. The
 ship was commanded by James Lancaster, and
 carried with it a number of men and goods.
 The voyage was long and dangerous, but
 the ship returned safely to England on the
 15th of May, 1602, having made the
 voyage in 140 days.

The first voyage of the East India Company
 was a success, and the company was
 established. The company was
 founded in 1600, and the first voyage
 was made in 1601. The company was
 founded by a group of men who
 wanted to trade with the East Indies.
 The company was founded in London,
 and the first voyage was made from
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Sir Thomas Tresham, as Grand Prior of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, employed a Mantuan named Luigi Schifanoja who also acted as a correspondent to the Mantuan ambassador at Brussels. His despatches give a lively picture of the fierce battle that raged. He describes, for instance, the sermon preached before the queen and her council and a congregation of five thousand on the first Sunday of Lent, 12 February 1559. The preacher attacked the Pope, the bishops, the regulars, the Church and the entire Faith. Schifanoja was scandalised and vowed never to go again, "yet more was I surprised at the concourse of people who madly flock to hear such vain things." He realized that his services would no longer be required by Tresham, "although he will doubtless remain a good christian, as he always was at the time of the other schism, but he will remain in the country and will observe the old rite secretly."² But Tresham was not to continue his opposition for long. He died on 1 March.³ He was succeeded by his grandson Thomas, then a boy of fifteen and a half, who was destined to hold high the torch of Faith through the dark days that were to come.

Parliament reassembled after Easter and still the debate continued. On 29 April Count de Feria the Spanish ambassador wrote to his master :

"The Bishop of Ely [Thomas Thirlby] has spoken today in Parliament very well and like a good Catholic, saying that he will die rather than consent to a change of religion."⁴

He wrote again on 10 May.

"Parliament closed the day before yesterday, Monday, and the queen . . . now remains governess of the Anglican church. The bishops, and others who are considered Catholics are as firm as on the first day, and the Bishop of Ely has honoured himself in the sight of God and the world, for the Catholics did not hold him in high esteem, and the heretics tried to gain him over by presents, but he determined to remain a good Catholic and an honest man."⁵

The Queen was obviously faced with a more difficult task than her father. In his day all the diocesan bishops, save one, bowed to his will. Now they were a very different set of men, and of the sixteen that had survived, only one, Kitchen of Llandaff,

"a greedy old man with but little learning"⁶ would acknowledge her as head of the Church. Between May and November the other fifteen were first put under some sort of restraint, then deprived, and most of them imprisoned till they died.

Bishop Poole of Peterborough who had been too ill to attend Parliament⁷ was deprived on 11 November 1559, and after a short imprisonment was allowed to live within a three mile circuit of London⁸ and later to retire to Staffordshire which was probably his native county. Burghley calls him "an ancient grave person and a very quiet subject",⁹ but this was not the opinion of Thomas Bentham, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, who reported that "the abiding of Dr. Poole, late bishop of Peterborough in that shire, with Bryan Fowler, esq., a little from Stafford, causeth many people to think worse of the regiment and religion than else they would do, because that divers lewd priests have resort thither."¹⁰ Poole died in 1568. John Boxall, who was among other things dean of Peterborough, was also deprived in November 1559, and spent two years in the Tower, till an outbreak of the plague caused his removal to Archbishop Parker's country seat at Beaksbourne (Kent), where he remained as an unwilling guest till his death in 1571.¹¹

But what of the lower clergy? In 1534 they had quite understandably followed their bishops into schism. Would they now follow their magnificent example of steadfast resistance? It is impossible to find any reliable figures for the whole of England, and estimates of those who openly resisted and were deprived vary from a quarter to a thirtieth. Taking even the highest figure, the result is disappointing and no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming. As in 1554 there were great divergencies between counties. Staffordshire, that had had the least deprived by Mary, now showed a high percentage of resistance. There were 47 conformist and 24 who were deprived, which is practically one-third.¹² Northamptonshire has another tale to tell. The principal record for this purpose is the Institution Book at Peterborough. When Peterborough bishopric was vacant, the institutions were made by the Archbishop of Canterbury and are to be found in his register at Lambeth. When Canterbury was also vacant they were made by the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, and are in the register at Canterbury. But all give us the same sort of information, namely the name and date of institution

of the incumbent, the reason for the vacancy, and very often the name of the last incumbent. Apart from these registers there is no other official source for determining the number deprived. Four reasons are given for vacancy—death, resignation, deprivation, and a fourth which is designated variously as *dimissio*, *amotio*, or *sessio*. In some cases no reason is given at all. From these three registers we get the following figures for Northamptonshire, during the first three years of Elizabeth's reign :

Resigned	15
Deprived	6
Dismissed or removed	5

It has been insinuated that a good deal of pressure was brought to bear on those who resigned and that they were virtually deprived. The evidence is all the other way. Of these fifteen, five still retained another living in the county, four were preferred to other livings in the county, and one was acting as a curate in 1576. The other five may have gone to other dioceses or may have resigned through age. There is nothing to show that any of them resigned for religious motives. It is not clear how we should distinguish between the deprived and the dismissed: possibly the latter left of their own accord, and the former waited for a judicial sentence. Assuming that the dismissed were virtually deprived and all of them for religion, we have a grand total of eleven out of 250 refusing to acknowledge the Queen's supremacy.

But even this meagre figure is too high. The rectors of Waddenhoe and Bradden were deprived, and the vicar of Harrowden was dismissed while Poole was still bishop. Whatever the reason it could not have been for the supremacy. Thus the number is reduced to eight. Roger Massey, vicar of Desborough John Morton (an ex-monk of Peterborough) rector of Dingley, Robert Toune, rector of Lutton, and Robert Kyrley, vicar of Southwick were dismissed or removed, and are never heard of again. Those deprived were William Tresham, rector of Bugbrook and Towcester, Anthony Draycott, rector of Cottingham and Kettering, Henry Comberford, rector of Yelvertoft, and Richard Conway, rector of Luddington. William Tresham, of the Treshams of Newton, was Vice-Chancellor of Oxford and was deprived of all his preferments. It has often been stated,

on the authority of Anthony à Wood, that he was allowed to keep Towcester. This, however, cannot be true, as Towcester was marked as "vacant" in the Visitation of August 1561. Nor was he allowed to keep Bugbrook, as stated by Gee.¹³ In 1562 he was under obligation to remain in Northamptonshire.¹⁴ He evidently lived in retirement with a married sister at Bugbrook, and was buried in the chancel there in 1569.¹⁵

Henry Comberford, who was also Precentor of Coventry and Lichfield, was in 1562 restricted to the county of Suffolk, with liberty to travel twice a year to his native Staffordshire and spend six weeks there. In 1570 he was arrested in Yorkshire, in the house of the Countess of Northumberland. In his examination of 8 November "he affirmeth the Mass to be good and saith he will maintain the same even until death."¹⁶ He was a prisoner in the Blockhouses at Hull in 1577, when he was described as "a great perverter of others".¹⁷ He died in prison at York 4 March 1586.¹⁸

Anthony Draycott was imprisoned in the Fleet in 1560¹⁹ and remained there till the great plague of 1564 necessitated the removal of the prisoners to Cambridgeshire.²⁰ After eleven years of confinement he was allowed, because of sickness, to retire to Draycott in Staffordshire, his family's home. A William Farington writes of him: "I learn as much of him in one day as ever I did learn in my life in a month, and we do serve God both day and night, for every night at the hour of midnight we be up and at prayer."²¹ He died 20 January 1571.²²

These two last belonged to the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield and had served on the commission against heresy when Bishop Poole was vicar-general there. It is extremely unlikely that either of them, or Tresham, ever resided on their livings in Northamptonshire. Of Richard Conway there are further particulars.

It is possible that a few more names should be added to this list. The fourteen incumbents who were deprived by Mary and reinstated by Elizabeth returned to their benefices, as though they had never left them, without any new presentation or institution. Hence there is no record of the fate of the men they displaced. Six of these can be traced to other livings and one died, so that not more than seven could have been forcibly ejected.

From the fact that so small a number resisted, it does not follow that all the rest conformed. Elizabeth's task was greatly simplified

by an abnormally high death-rate among the clergy, due to the plague of 1556-9. In the all-important years, 1558-61, eighty-three livings fell vacant through deaths and eleven through causes unknown. This is nearly forty percent of the total strength. At the visitation of Bishop Scambler in August 1561 there were seventy-five incumbents who had been instituted since the deprivation of Bishop Poole, and twenty-two livings were vacant. Thus nearly a hundred of the Marian clergy were probably never called upon to make the fatal choice. Thereafter the changeover was rapid. By 1570 only forty-one of the old clergy remained: by 1580 only sixteen: by 1590 only nine. The last to die was Edward Ball, rector of Woodford, who had been ordained by Thomas Watson, last Catholic bishop of Lincoln, in June 1558,²³ and who survived till 1608. Some of those who were instituted later had been ordained in Catholic days. Nicholas Farrar, rector of Edgcote, for instance, was not instituted till 1575, but he had been a scholar and perhaps a religious at Wigmore (Hereford), and was ordained in 1539 by Bishop John Shert, the last abbot there.²⁴ But the number of such that can be traced is very small, and all of them had died before 1600.

Two of those who accepted the new order thought better of it later and resigned. William Ely, brother of the celebrated professor at Douai, was instituted rector of Crick, 2 May 1560, but resigned within a year and in 1609 died for his Faith in Hereford gaol.²⁵ William Walker, made rector of Passenham 6 May 1559, resigned in November 1580, was committed to the Fleet in February 1582²⁶ for refusing the oath of supremacy, and spent at least a year there. Too many, however, were endowed with the agile versatility of the vicar of Bray. There were thirty-four who had held on to their livings since the days of Henry VIII. Thomas Fox, vicar of Weedon Lois, clung to his benefice from 1524 till 1570. One wonders what his thoughts were when he came to write his will, and looked back over those forty-six years:

"I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, to our Lady St. Mary, and to all the company in Heaven, and my body to be buried in the parish church of Weedon, in the place where St. Margaret's altar stood."²⁷

There was little nostalgia for the old rites among the clergy, or at least there is little recorded. John Cruse, vicar of Pattishall since 1529, was presented at the Visitation of 1570, "that he useth Latin services of our Lady with *Ave Maria*, which annoyeth the hearers. He answereth granting the article, saving that he sayeth not such service in the church nor in the hearing of others, but secretly to himself. And he saith that he thinketh himself bound thereto by his order even of conscience."²⁸ Ralph Greenhall, vicar of Culworth, was in 1574 presented because, "he keepeth a young woman in his house very suspiciously, and suffereth the youth to dance in service time, and is suspected of popery". Later on in the same year we are informed that "he is beaten almost to death". These, however, are exceptional charges. Apart from accusations of adultery and the like (which are rather less numerous than in previous reigns) the clergy are charged with having leanings, not to popery but to puritanism: with refusing to wear the surplice, to kneel, or to use the cross in baptism.

II.

And what of the laity? Here it is harder to form an opinion, for unless they held some office of state they were not required to take the oath of supremacy during the first twenty years of this reign. What evidence there is goes to show that the vast majority went to church on Sundays. It was a very ancient tradition that had not only been commanded under pain of grave sin, but enforced by the ecclesiastical courts. These courts had coercive powers: they could punish moral lapses not only by excommunication, but by fines, public penances, whippings and imprisonment. The authority of the bishop and the archdeacons, by their regular visitations, reached to the most remote village. The incumbent and the churchwardens were bound by oath to present all offenders, and in a rural community no public sinner could hope to escape the long arm of the law. Elizabeth took over this powerful machinery as it stood, and used it to suppress the religion that had devised it.

There are, during the first decade or so of the reign, a number of presentments for not going to church, but there is nothing to show that the culprits were papists, and much to show that most of them were either slack or inclined to puritanism. Not a

single place or name that was later to be noted for popery appears during these years. There was no more obstinate papist than Robert Price of Tansor and Washingley. Yet when in April 1582 he was asked how long it was since he went to his parish church he answered "that he hath not come to the church this twelve months past . . . yet he confesseth that he did come to the church for the space of ten years last before that, and received the Communion at sundry times".²⁹ Apart from Simon Norwich, of whom more anon, I can find no papist in this country who abstained from church attendance at this time, and it is generally agreed by their contemporary Catholics that the vast majority, in most parts of England, conformed externally, whatever their secret convictions.

On the other hand, there is, as we should expect in a community largely illiterate, far greater reluctance to give up their ancient religious customs than is evident amongst the clergy. Whatever they thought of the pope and the periodic *volte face* of bishops and other politicians, they clung with all the conservatism of the countryside to the religious objects that had been revered for countless generations.

The "Injunctions" of 1559 require the destruction of "all shrines, coverings of shrines, all tables, candlesticks, trundles and rolls of wax, pictures, paintings . . . so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass windows, or elsewhere within their churches and houses".³⁰ This was carried out to the letter in many London churches, "yea, in many places walls were rased, windows were dashed down, because some images (little regarding what) were painted on them. And not only images, but rood-lofts, relics, sepulchres, books, banners, copes, vestments, altar-cloths were in divers places committed to the fire; and that with such shouting and applause of the vulgar sort, as if it had been the sacking of some hostile city."³¹ Indeed a proclamation had to be issued in September 1560 "against breaking or defacing monuments of antiquity being set up in churches or other public places, for memory and not for superstition."³²

These Injunctions, however, were not carried out with any enthusiasm in the villages. There are a score of complaints in the Visitations, as late as 1574, that even the rood loft was still standing. Sometimes it was only the foot of the rood loft that

was scandalizing the godly. Often the holy water stock and the candlesticks remained. At Irthlingborough in 1570 there were two altars standing "and be not pulled down as they ought". At Barton Seagrave the high altar was "unpulled down". At Astwell "there is standing the foot of the rood loft and certain images in the top of the chancel and the old taper stocks". At West Haddon there were three altar stones in the church. At Guilsborough they "have remaining their candlesticks and a pyx and handbells and holy water stock to carry about holy water". At Grafton Regis there was "an image of an angel remaining over the font". At Sibbertoft there were "a great number of monuments of idolatry".³³ As late as 1580 at some unspecified parish the churchwardens present "that in our glass windows the picture of Christ crucified and other images remain, because the parish are not able to make the windows new with other glass."³⁴

Sometimes these offending objects were dutifully removed but not destroyed. In 1574 at Weedon Lois a process was started against "certain persons who conserve papistical monuments". Against the entry is written the significant words, *Non inveniri possunt*, they cannot be found.³⁵ At Culworth in 1576 the churchwardens themselves were in trouble, "for that a day to communicate was appointed and the churchwardens having warning to provide wine for the communicants they did not provide any . . . Also the foresaid churchwardens do keep a Rood in a secret place adjoining the steeple, and will not deface it".³⁶ They were ordered to demolish it. At Cransley in 1570 it was objected against Richard Houghton, "that many copes, pyxes, and Mass-books and other monuments of idolatry were in a chest in his house undefaced."³⁷

"The 5 day of October in the year of our lord 1581 in the town house of Scaldwell were found certain images and other monuments of popery, that is to say the picture of Christ called the Rood, the picture of St. Peter, both of wood, undefaced, the picture of the Trinity and the picture of St. Modwen with her cow standing by her, both of alabaſter, undefaced, and a table or tabernacle of wood which in the time of popery did stand upon the altar with a great number of images appertaining to the same all of alabaſter, undefaced."³⁸

The complaint from Rockingham in 1581, "for ringing on All Saints day after evening prayers,"³⁹ is a reminder of the Catholic devotion to the Holy Souls, on which Protestantism was particularly severe. Some of these customs died hard: others were continued with a secular explanation. At Brigstock they tell of the farmer who, aggrieved by some injustice, hitched the church bell to a cow's tail that it might ring in protest three times a day in perpetuity. As long as it was called the Cow Bell and not the *Angelus* it might continue.

Most of the above cases refer to the simple, unlettered peasantry. Of the reactions of the educated minority there is even less evidence. In 1564 each bishop was ordered to send to the Privy Council a report on the state of his diocese. Bishop Scambler has a good deal to say about this minority, but he hardly ever distinguishes between papist and puritan. Both were equally disturbing and his complaints might apply to either. Thus his estimate of the Commission of the Peace is as follows.

"Sir Walter Mildmay, Sir Robert Law, Mr. Edward Montague, Edmund Elmes, George Lynn, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Watts, earnest furtherers of religion.

"Mr. Valentine Knightley, Sir John Spencer, Sir Thomas Griffin, Sir John Fermor, Edward Griffin, Mr. Catesby of Whiston, Thomas Lovett, great letters [hinderers] of religion."

Of these only Edward Griffin shows up later as a papist, though Fermor and Catesby had many Catholic relatives and possibly popish leanings. Knightley and Spencer developed into strong puritans, and the others were not very prominent.

Scambler complains that, "the straggling doctors and priests who have liberty to stray at their pleasure within this realm do much hurt secretly and in corners". This perhaps refers more to Catholics than to puritans, but the rest of his remarks give us no hint as to which party was being troublesome. "Gentlemen of evil religion" keep schoolmasters of corrupt judgments who "do exceeding great hurt as well in those houses where they teach as in the country abroad about them"; the chief constables "which be ring-leaders of the people" are for the most part "fawtors [favourers] of naughty religion: the "ministers of God's word . . . be now in a manner nothing esteemed": such is the burden of his report, and it tells us next to nothing.⁴⁰

But rich or poor, clerk or layman, their reception of the new order of things was not enthusiastic, if one may judge by the way they kept their churches. There were occasional presentments for delapidations in earlier years, but they are negligible in comparison with the crescendo of complaints, from every part of the county, from 1570 onwards. The destruction of popish monuments and of stained-glass was considered an act of piety, but there was nothing in the creed of the Reformers to account for the shameful neglect of the very fabric, which is all too painfully obvious in the official documents.

In 1570 the complaints are chiefly concerned with the churchyards. The walls were decayed and hogs were straying in and routing up the bodies. At Lowick there was a "pair of butts in the churchyard", and at West Haddon "a foul pit". Something is left to the imagination in the complaint from Irthlingborough which simply says "the churchyard in confusion". The pious zeal that had smashed the stained-glass windows did not always extend to replacing them with plain glass. At Drayton "there is a window stopped up half with daubing": at Holcot "their church windows be stopped with boards and dirt". Sometimes even the "daubing" was lacking. At Irthlingborough "the glass windows be broken that twenty nobles will not make them sufficient". Hence it is no surprise that at Orlingbury and Rothwell the church was like a "duffcote".⁴¹ It is possible, in successive reports, to watch, as it were, the gradual deterioration of this last spacious church. By 1573 "the chancel is in utter ruin and decay".⁴² In 1631 the font was leaking "so that they set the water in a bowl."⁴³ In 1637 "the eastward window of the chancel is daubed up at the bottom some five or six feet in height, very unseemly, and it is thought fit to be taken down some three foot lower or more and leaded."⁴⁴ In 1657 the spire and part of the tower fell down taking six bays with it.⁴⁵ In 1673 the transepts were pulled down, probably because they were in ruins.⁴⁶ But we are anticipating.

Not all the damage was due to neglect: some was due to deliberate sacrilege. It was a time when the *nouveaux riches* were busy building, often with the spoils of the Church, those magnificent houses for which the county is famous. There was a great demand for lead, and what more handy than that on the roofs of the churches? Parliament had sanctioned the destruction

of what are now called redundant churches, and it was not difficult to find a minor official who would vouch for the redundancy. In 1562 Edward Mountsteven, a layman in the employ of the bishop of Peterborough, wrote to Sir William Cecil (afterwards Lord Burghley):

“A certain church in this diocese called Artleborough is devaſtated and in utter ruin and the parſhioners otherwiſe ſufficiently provided of a church. Remembering your honours daily neceſſity of lead wherewith the ſame church is covered, I brake thereof with Mr. Latimer our dean using much in beating in that behalf and he ſhewed me the lead is worth £10 and better, and that no man ſhould have it from your honour.”⁴⁷

This was the pariſh church of All Saints, Irthlingborough, and after the removal of the lead it was “raiſed, plucked down and defaced,”⁴⁸ and its tithes conſiſcated. There was alſo the collegiate church of St. Peter. The college had been ſuppreſſed under Edward VI, and out of its revenues a curate was paid twenty marks a year. He was now given an additional ten or eleven pounds “for admitting the parſhioners of All Saints to repair to St. Peter’s”, and for miniſtering to their needs. Seventy-five years later the people were ſtill burying their dead in the cemetery attached to the ruin, and it was ſuggeſted by the viſitator that either All Saints ſhould be rebuilt or St. Peter’s enlarged, becauſe “the parſhioners of All Saints are enforced to repair to St. Peter’s. which is not capable to receive them all”.⁴⁹ Nothing, however, was done and St. Peter’s remains the ſole church. Nor was this the only church deſtroyed to provide lead for Burghley Houſe. St Mary’s Grimsby had already met a curiouſly ſimilar fate, having been declared unneceſſary by the vicar Thomas Williamson who was alſo rector of Eaſton on the Hill, the pariſh next to Burghley Houſe.⁵⁰ Six fadders (nearly ſix tons) of lead alſo came from the choir and aiſles of one of the county’s proudeſt monuments, the collegiate church of Fotheringhay.⁵¹

Lead was ſo valuable that it was worth the expense of ſubſtituting ſlates. In 1571 it was objected againſt Matthew Odell, rector of Bulwick that he “is a grievous blaſphemer of God’s

holy name and useth to swear both by God's blood, body and God's wounds for every trifle, both with his servants and others, and bringeth up his children in the same order. Also that he hath pulled down one piece of the chancel which was covered with lead to the quantity of four yards broad and five yards deep, and the same hath sold away and covered the place again with slate."⁵²

Bishop's Visitations, whether of monasteries or of parishes, give only the seamy side of life, and it is only fair to state that there were many parishes where his lordship found *omnia bene*. But when all due allowance is made, it is difficult to escape the conviction that this was not an age of great religious fervour, and what fervour there was has left a trail of devastation which is universally deplored.

III.

Elizabeth's religious policy was the work of Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley, the outstanding statesman of his time. With the experience of Mary's excesses fresh in his mind he knew that open persecution only made people more obstinate. His policy was to "strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be dispersed": to win over or liquidate the clergy and university professors, and leave the rest to time: to abolish the Mass and all specifically Catholic ritual, cut off the supply of new priests, and leave the old church to die, inevitably, of inanition. Priests who refused to conform were, of course, deprived, but they were not otherwise molested as long as they kept quiet and were not caught saying Mass. The penalty for saying or hearing Mass was a fine of one hundred marks for the first offence, four hundred marks or a year's imprisonment for the second, and *praemunire*, i.e. life imprisonment and forfeiture of all goods, for the third offence. Weekly attendance at protestant worship, and the reception of Communion "from time to time", were made obligatory, under pain of a fine of twelve pence for each offence.

As far as Northamptonshire was concerned the policy was working admirably. The clergy were docile and the laity indifferent. But in other parts of England, particularly in the north, there was considerable opposition and corresponding penalties. In November 1569 their smouldering disaffection

blazed into open revolt. This "Northern Rebellion" was, however, badly organized and half-heartedly pursued. It was suppressed without much trouble, and was followed by the leisurely hanging of some six hundred papists and the wholesale looting of their possessions. Then in the following February came the famous Bull, excommunicating Elizabeth and releasing all her subjects from their allegiance to her. It was published in London on 25 May, when John Felton nailed it to the gates of the bishop's palace, an act that cost him his life. Had the Bull coincided with the rebellion the sequel might have been very different. As it was it fell as a damp squib. Elizabeth affected supreme contempt and answered it in Latin verse "scoffing at the Apostolic authority, saying that the barque of Peter should never enter a port of hers."⁵³

Politically the Bull was ill-timed, and presented the queen with a useful stick to beat the papists with. It was a grievous embarrassment to the many loyal priests and laymen who had no wish to meddle in politics. Yet a firm line of some sort was necessary to arrest the gradual drift into protestantism, which was Burghley's policy, and it is difficult to imagine what effective measure could have been employed, that would not have been represented by Elizabeth as an act of aggression, and turned to her own advantage.

Such a Bull would scarcely have any effect on the sort of clergy and laity that we have been considering. There is not a shred of evidence to suggest that any notice was taken of it in Northamptonshire, unless we may attribute to it some scurrilous verses which were "cast abroad in the streets of Northampton in 1570", and of which the following sample will be more than enough :

How now my Masters maryed Priestes
How like you of these newes :
You must forsake your wicked lyves
Your wyves must to the stewes.

What neede our women now take care
What life they go or leade,
Sithe every preaching knave must have
A whoore in house to trade.

Here is not now a strumpet whoore
In all the land to have :

They are so sodainly snatched up
With some Geneva knave.

Maiſter Wyborne, alias tiburne tyke
Here dwelleth in this towne,
Which sought by all the meanes he could
The Eaſter to plucke downe.

But I of hym dere well pronounce
And tyme the truth ſhall try,
That he ſhall truſt unto his heeles
Or els in Smithfield fry.

Percival Wyborne was a puritan miniſter at Whiſton. The "Eaſter" is evidently the Eaſter Sepulchre. Theſe verſes were answered by others equally ſcurrilous but rather too long, and published in a little tract that is now extremely rare.⁵⁴

What effect the Bull had in more Catholic parts of England it is difficult to aſſeſs, becauſe it was ſoon followed by a very different counterſtroke, and one that upset all Burghley's calculations. In 1568 Doctor William Allen, afterwards Cardinal, had founded the famous Seminary at Douai in Flanders, and thither flocked great numbers of Engliſh youths, rich and poor, for prieſtly ſtudies, that were no longer poſſible at home. In 1574 they began to arrive by ſtealth in England, and ſoon the flagging ſpirits of the Catholics began to revive.

On 21 June 1577, John Aylmer, biſhop of London wrote to Walsingham

"My Lord of Canterbury and I have received from divers of our brethren, biſhops of this realm, that the Papiſts do marvelouſly increaſe both in number and in obſtinate withdrawing of themſelves from the church and ſervice of God : for the remedy whereof, the manner of their puniſhment hath not only little availed, but alſo hath been a means, by ſparing of their houſekeeping, greatly to enrich them ; and ſuch as here upon ſuit have been enlarged, and upon hope of amendment ſent into their counties, have drawn great multitudes of their tenants and friends into the like malicious obſtinacy ; wherefore, with conference had with the reſt of our colleagues, we

have thought good to forbear the imprisoning of the richer sort, and to punish them by round fines to be imposed for *contemptuous* refusing of receiving the Communion according to our order and commandments; for if we should directly punish them for not coming to the church, they have to allege that the penalty being already set down by statute (which is 12d. for every such offence) is not by us to be altered or aggravated. This [i.e. the proposed] manner of fining of them will procure the Queen £1,000 by year to her coffers; whatsoever it do more, it will weaken the enemy, and touch him much nearer than any pain heretofore inflicted hath done."⁵⁵

This suggestion was not acted upon at once, but between October 1577 and the following February the bishops were busy compiling lists of papists in their dioceses. They reached the very modest total of 1,387 for the whole of England. This was only a few months after the bishop of London's complaint about their marvellous increase.

Scambler's list for the diocese of Peterborough, sent on October 26, contains only six names.

In Rutland was "Mr. Chambers of Ediweston, priest, brother to my Lady St. John of Bletsoe, who hath no lands nor goods but private and unknown."

In Northamptonshire :

"Mr. Simon Norwich esquire of Brampton a traveller for his pleasure into France whose lands are worth two hundred pounds a year.

"Mr. Price of Washingley, his lands worth two hundred pounds a year.

"Mr. William Brudenell, brother to Sir Edmund Brudenell whose living dependeth much of his brother and is otherwise unknown.

"Mr. Slade of Rushton his lands worth twenty marks a year.

"Peter Norwich gentleman, a musician, sometime with Sir Edmund Montague, his substance unknown and not great and when he was with Sir Edmund [he was] teaching his children music."⁵⁶

Scambler writes again on 18 November to certify that he has received the submission of Mr. Slade who professes that he "came to church and received the sacraments of late time". But he adds

"I am since that time undoubtedly advertised of one of good wealth unknown to me before, supposed, in obstinacy in religion and not coming to the church, equal to the backwardest in my diocese, called Mr. Colwell who dwelleth in a corner solitary set, called the Hermitage near unto Dingley in the county of Northampton, and I have both written and sent for him, but yet I cannot speak with him nor be certified of his substance which I take to be great, or of his christian name. Also there is one Mr. Standish, supposed to be a man of five hundred marks yearly revenue and worth a thousand pounds in substance, that dwelleth sometime at Wolfor [Wolfage] a house in Northamptonshire in the parish of Brixworth, but for the most part he dwelleth in Lancashire as I am informed, where he is said to be ever, when I send for him, so that I could never get him to any conference as yet, but I am certified by very credible reports and do believe he never came at the church since the Queen's Majesty's reign, and he hath made shift to escape my conference by change of dwelling; so doth the rest in my diocese of that opinion that he is of, and therefore it is a busy matter to bring them before me."⁵⁷

This list is not imposing, but Scambler's second letter reveals some of the difficulties that beset him. He probably had nothing to go on except hearsay, and just gave the names of a few who were notorious for popery. It is strange to find Mr. Price in this list, as we have seen his own statement that he went to the church at this time. Mr. Slade is said to have conformed and in his place are two whose christian names the bishop cannot ascertain. William Brudenell and Peter Norwich were younger brothers of no great worth. The trick of evading conference with the bishop by change of dwelling was practised by many of the wealthier recusants, and was sometimes called "riding up and down". It was a favourite dodge of the Prices, whose house at Wasingley was just inside Huntingdonshire, in the diocese of Ely, but who were expected to go to their parish-church of Lutton (Northamptonshire) in the diocese of Peterborough. They were still playing this trick on bishop Dove of Peterborough thirty years later.⁵⁸

But what demonstrates the inadequacy of Scambler's list is the story of Simon Norwich, which is worth giving in some detail.

IV.

On the road from Desborough to Market Harborough there stands an ancient farm house with the romantic name of the "Hermitage". In Catholic days this was known as the Hermitage of Beſton. It was dedicated to St. Auguſtine of Canterbury and had a venerated image of that ſaint. It was a centre of pilgrimage, and old folk in Elizabeth's reign could ſtill remember when "many repairing thither were cured of divers diſeaſes both lame, blind etc."⁵⁹ When the laſt hermit, whoſe name was Chambers, was turned out, Simon Norwich, who lived at Brampton Aſh, a mile to the north, quietly annexed the property. In it he placed, at a rent of 10/- a year, Thomas Colwell and his wife, who had been driven from their houſe at Faversham (Kent) by the religious perſecution.⁶⁰

As we have ſeen, Biſhop Scambler knew of Colwell by November 1577, but it was not until the following year that the full extent of popery practiſed in the Hermitage became known. Simon Norwich had an uncle, Henry Norwich, of Corby, whoſe name conſtantly occurs as a common informer againſt Catholics. It was a glaring caſe of what was ſo common in thoſe days, of a family bitterly divided by religious differences. Simon and his brothers Edward and Peter had always remained ſtaunch Catholics. Simon had fought for Queen Mary in the battle of St. Quentin (10 Auguſt 1557) and had been taken priſoner on the fall of Nicholas Vaux's old poſt at Guisnes, ſoon after.⁶¹ Henry on the other hand had fought againſt the Catholic inſurgents in the Northern rebellion of 1569 and, it was alleged, had rather overdone the looting that followed.⁶² He had received a drubbing in a barber's ſhop in Bedford in 1573,⁶³ but it is not ſtated whether this was for informing on his neighbours. Certainly a "Queen's man" was not popular, and on Friday 13 April 1576, when he attended Kettering Market, he got the ſhock of his life. He was ſuddenly attacked by his own nephew, Edward, who uſed "a baſtinado or crabtree cudgel, a foreign kind of villainous weapon". According to Henry's account he received "vehement and mighty blows", cauſing "great and ſore hurts, wounds and bruises upon his neck, back and arms and other parts of his body" ſo that he "hardly eſcaped with his life".⁶⁴ Edward admits that "having a little ſtaff in his hand he did with the ſame

give a little blow".⁶⁵ Henry's account is probably nearer the truth.

Henry sued his nephew for assault. The case was heard at the quarter sessions held at Northampton at Michaelmas 1577, before William Lord Vaux, Sir Edmund Brudenell, Sir John Spencer and others.⁶⁶ What the judgment was is not known, but it did not satisfy Henry Norwich, and in the following year he brought the case to the Star Chamber. It is from the voluminous documents concerning this case that the whole story can be pieced together. Henry avows that the assault was not the work of Edward Norwich only, but involved Simon Norwich, Sir Thomas Tresham, and a number of servants of Lord Mordaunt of Drayton. It was a concerted attack by the local papists. They were armed with a picturesque assortment of weapons, "swords, bucklers, daggers, long piked staves, cudgels, bastina-does and sundry other weapons as well invasive as defensive". Edward Norwich in addition to his bastinado had a sword and buckler, "but he drew it not, for it would not out".⁶⁷ Sir Thomas Tresham on the other hand drew his sword, but swore in evidence that he did so only to try to prevent a breach of the peace.⁶⁸

Henry retails many other injustices that he had received at the hands of these papists. He claims that, to prevent him bringing the case earlier, they procured his arrest on the charge of stealing a surplice out of the church at Brampton "whereout he might have stolen the Bible or the Communion Cup and kept it seven years before Simon himself had missed it."⁶⁹ This was a sly dig at Simon's recusancy, and Henry followed it up with devastating evidence. He accuses Simon of importing bulls, pardons and other superstitious devices, of supporting a popish scholar at Louvain, of using *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis*, and a Latin bible, and of subverting and defacing the English Bible. He avers that Simon had never been to Church since Her Majesty's accession "unless it have been at any armitage in the woods near his house, where sometimes, with divers vagrant persons known to be massing priests he heareth mass".⁷⁰ This was the Hermitage occupied by Thomas Colwell. Henry was able to bring many witnesses to prove that Simon had never been to Church, and slowly the awful truth was disclosed in court that Simon was harbouring in the Hermitage, dressed in his livery of blue and red, no less than four old priests named



ARMS OF SIR JOHN FERMER AND MAUD
VAUX HIS WIFE

*From the tomb of Sir Richard Fermer in the church
at Easton Neston*

Newman, Oliver, Francis Donne and Collier. Witnesses deposed that he had a chalice, a superaltar, or altar stone, a vestment, an altar and a mass book.⁷¹ Elizabeth Palmer wife of the parson of Brampton accused him of wearing a cross with images in it.⁷²

For the defence, Sir Thomas Tresham denied that there was any truth whatever in the Bill, which was brought "vexatiously to put them to excessive expenses".⁷³ But on the specifically religious charges all the defendants were ominously silent.

Henry won his case. Simon was committed to the Marshalsea prison "for popistry" on 26 November 1578 and removed to the Fleet in the following February.⁷⁴ He was set at liberty in 1583, but was constantly in trouble for his faith, till his death on St. George's day 1586.⁷⁵ Henry was instructed to procure the arrest of two of the priests, Collier and Donne, and also of Thomas Colwell,⁷⁶ but apparently he was not successful.

In 1580 when a commission was set up to discover "concealed land" i.e. church land that had never reached the Queen, Henry Norwich called attention to the Hermitage, but Simon Norwich succeeded in purchasing it and Colwell lived there for several years unmolested, with his wife and his eight children. He had "at all times great resort of virtuous and learned priests repairing thither for the comfort of their souls and bodies." Then in 1587 there arrived a priest named Montford Scot who was destined to die a martyr in 1591, who strongly objected to Colwell living in what had once been a religious house. "Get ye forth of this house," he said "as fast as ye can, for I never knew any lay folks that dwelt in these religious houses but their ends were either heresy or beggery, of which the last he accounted the best." Colwell was very upset and went all the way to Canterbury to make atonement to St. Augustine, by walking round the walls of the cathedral. Sir Thomas Tresham offered him a house in Rushton, but before he could move his wife and family, he was arrested on his way to London and sent to the Fleet in October 1589. In the following spring he was released on bail, returned to the Hermitage and carried his family to Rushton. The very next day his period of liberty expired. "This is a sorrowful welcome to Rushton", said his wife. "Nay", quoth he, "I rather take it for a farewell to the Hermitage". And so kissing her, and giving his children his blessing departed, as he was bound

by sureties to yield himself again prisoner to the Fleet. Here he languished, "clean comfortless from his loving wife," for three more years. There were priests among the prisoners and he had "the comfort of the blessed Sacraments, and the use of his daily service upon his breviary, and keeping all fasting days he never missed to the hour of his death." On Sunday 4 February 1593 "he kneeled at his prayers upon his breviary against a table, and having ended his prayers, laid himself across his beds, seeming to take some little rest, leaning upon his hand and elbow of his left arm, as he used before time to do, and so departed this life . . . And when it drew towards night the warden's officers buried him at St. Brides, being the parish of the Fleet."⁷⁷

The Hermitage still stands to remind us of these tragic days, but its story has been told here to show how misleading official documents can be. Had it not been for the affray in Kettering market we should know nothing of the four priests harboured by Simon Norwich. Who knows how many other places there were, hidden in quiet corners, among loyal and sympathetic friends, where the Mass continued in secret, and where there was no Henry Norwich to pry and betray.

On 29 November 1577, Cuthbert Mayne was executed at Launceston (Cornwall) on a trumped-up charge of bringing into England a copy of the Bull of excommunication. It was a significant event. It was something more than the martyrdom of the first seminary priest. It was a tacit admission that Burghley's policy of slow strangulation had failed. The tide of defection had been stemmed. All over the country people were turning their backs on the time-serving, state-ridden ministers and the desecrated churches, and, with a fervour unknown in England for centuries, were rallying to the ardent young priests from Douai. The government's policy changed. Catholicism must be stamped out by brutal persecution: by fines and imprisonment, by banishment and exile, by whipping and torture, by hanging and quartering.

As early as 1577 the two parties are clearly discernable: the government group, including the hierarchy and an ever-growing number of incumbents, whom they instituted; a fair number of wealthy men, many with a vested interest in the Reformation settlement; their numerous servants, and a high proportion of towns-people and artisans. On the other side were many old

families, and the majority of the conservative country-folk. There seems little doubt that the Catholics were a substantial majority, but the government had a monopoly of all the machinery of life, the churches, schools, universities, professions, army and navy, penalties and rewards, printing and propaganda, and a highly organized secret service. Against such odds the Catholics could only organize themselves into an underground resistance movement, that was sometimes driven by exasperation to ill-advised and hopeless conspiracy. The totalitarian grip on them was complete.

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM

I.

IT was amid the bewildering religious changes sketched in the previous chapters that William, 3rd Baron Vaux, passed his early years. Born at Harrowden in August 1535, a month after the martyrdom of St. Thomas More, his boyhood was spent among scenes of devastation, with which his father's plaintive songs were in complete harmony. The results of Henry VIII's policy must have been only too obvious: the gaunt, roofless religious houses, that had not yet mellowed into those picturesque ruins of which England is so proud: the restless spirit of innovation: the growing influence of ideas imported from Germany and Geneva, and the overthrow of the traditions of Catholicism, which had been taken for granted for a thousand years.

He was twelve when Henry VIII died and they started pulling down the roods and smashing the statues. How his own church at Great Harrowden fared we have no evidence, but there is never a complaint about popish monuments there in after years. James Burdett, the vicar, had come over from Normandy,¹ doubtless at the invitation of William's grandfather. He had weathered the storm. He had been vicar at least thirty years when he came to die in 1557. His successor William Valentine lasted only about a year and then "ceded". William Yate was instituted in March 1559, three months before the new English service was imposed: he lasted about five years. Then came Thomas Dudley in July 1564 and he was deprived, presumably for puritanism, in October 1573, and the church laid under an interdict. Next came George Watson and he was soon in trouble "for saying the service after the church was enterdited, in contempt etc."² He submitted, with promise of better behaviour, and was absolved: nevertheless he was deprived in 1575. Then came Christopher Holmes who lasted from June 1575 to August 1576, when Owen Nicholas succeeded. He too was

1871

1871

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The first of the series of lectures on the history of the English language was given by Mr. J. A. H. Murray, F.R.S., on the 11th of January, 1871, at the University of Cambridge. The lecture was attended by a large number of students, and was highly successful. Mr. Murray's lecture was the first of a series of lectures on the history of the English language, which he gave at the University of Cambridge, and which were highly successful. The lectures were given at the University of Cambridge, and were highly successful. The lectures were given at the University of Cambridge, and were highly successful.

The second of the series of lectures on the history of the English language was given by Mr. J. A. H. Murray, F.R.S., on the 18th of January, 1871, at the University of Cambridge. The lecture was attended by a large number of students, and was highly successful. Mr. Murray's lecture was the second of a series of lectures on the history of the English language, which he gave at the University of Cambridge, and which were highly successful. The lectures were given at the University of Cambridge, and were highly successful. The lectures were given at the University of Cambridge, and were highly successful.

soon in trouble, for in September 1577 a process went out, calling him to take up his residence immediately, "because great is the outcry of the local people".³ They seem to have given him a warm welcome for in 1581 he was in trouble again, because "the vicarage house is in ruin and decay, being wilfully burned by certain lewd persons."⁴ There was a long way to go to the gentility of Barchester.

But to return to William. He came of age in August 1556 and in the October following succeeded to the title on the death of his father. His mother died a month later. He had an elder sister Maud, a brother Nicholas and two younger sisters, Anne and Catherine. Maud married Anthony Burrows, of Burrow-on-the-Hill (Leics.) and Anne married Reginald Bray of Stean (Northants.) and Hinton (Warwicks.). Catherine never appears, and may have died young.

Nicholas occupied the vastly inferior position which was, then more than now, the lot of a younger brother of a peer. There is one story, in which he appears, that is worth recording. It concerns one Henry Norwich, a tailor of Northampton. The fact that he has a brother named Simon makes it most probable that he is to be identified with the gentleman who received the bastinado in Kettering market.

On Sunday, 27 August 1564, Richard Pell, who kept an inn in Northampton, was riding peacefully home when he was attacked at the north gate of the town by Henry Jones and Richard Jones, the latter being servant unto Nicholas Vaux, esquire. Afraid to go home, Pell took refuge in the house of one Lawrence Mershe, where he found, among other company, William Lane esquire and Richard Knowles, gentleman. That evening Henry Norwich and Nicholas Vaux called, and Henry sent up a glove and a challenge to Richard Pell, while Nicholas Vaux waited in the court beneath Mershe's house "intending to have comen up unto the said Pell and to have knocked two or three pots about his head as he sat as supper, if Mr. Lane had not been there as their defendant." Thus William Lane prevented Nicholas from leaving his mark on history or on Pell. But this promising start ended in tragedy.

Next morning Richard Pell had to leave early to go to his own house, because he had an illustrious guest to attend to. This was none other than the Queen's favourite, Robert Dudley,

who the next month was created Earl of Leicester. As Pell rode down the High Street, called the Old Drapery, he was accosted by Henry Norwich, who wanted him then and there to go into a field and fight a duel. Richard refused, whereupon Henry Norwich called Henry Jones "a busy quarrelsome fellow" and the inevitable affray took place in the public street, in the presence of Thomas Coles, a former mayor of Northampton and a Justice of the peace.

Now it happened that Queen Elizabeth was at that moment making a progress through the town and was not far off. Pell and Jones were arrested and by order of the Privy Council committed to the ward of Mr. Hopton, being Knight Marshal, and presumably in the Queen's train. They were committed to gaol at Northampton, and because the fray was judged to be "within the precincts of the queen's court . . . the offenders are to lose one of their hands."⁵

Of the religious views of William Lord Vaux at the date of his coming into the title we have no evidence. There is, however, one indication that the cleavage between Catholic and Protestant was already fairly clearly marked, even before the advent of Elizabeth. It is to be found in the intermarriages of the principal families. Marriages in Tudor days were largely social and political alliances between families, in which the contracting parties had very little say, and it is instructive to notice, what became so evident later on, that the families prominent as Catholics in a few years' time were already marrying almost exclusively amongst themselves.

William Vaux, was no exception. His first wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Beaumont of Grace Dieu (Leics.), a family with a long history as recusants, and with Catholic descendants to this day. They were married some time before 1 June 1557. There were four children, Henry, Eleanor, Elizabeth and Anne. The last-named and youngest was baptized at Irthlingborough on 9 July 1562. The dates of birth of the others are unknown, but may be placed approximately in 1559, 1560, and 1561. Less than a month after Anne's birth her mother died, and was buried at Irthlingborough on 12 August. In the following year, 1563, William chose a second wife from another great Catholic family. She was Mary, daughter of John Tresham of Rushton, and sister of Thomas Tresham.

We have already met with Thomas Tresham in the market-place at Kettering, but as we shall hear much more of him, a word must be said here of his origins. He was grandson of Sir Thomas Tresham, Grand Prior of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, who has a magnificent tomb in Rushton church. We have seen the testimony of his servant that the Grand Prior practised as a Catholic in secret, but this did not prevent him holding office under Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary, or from petitioning for a great deal of monastic property.⁶

The Grand Prior's sister Clemence was a nun of Syon Abbey, Isleworth, and when this community was driven out by Henry VIII she returned to Rushton. She does not appear to have rejoined when the scattered nuns enjoyed a brief spell of peace under Mary, before they were driven into exile by Elizabeth. Clemence died at Rushton on 6 September 1567. She formerly had a marble monument, representing her in her black and white habit, in the church of St. Peter's, but when this church was destroyed in 1799, the tomb of her brother was moved to the church of All Saints, but her tomb was not preserved.⁷ Doubtless our Sir Thomas was responsible for these lovely monuments.

John Tresham, son of the Grand Prior, was born at Sywell (Northants.) about 1520, and went to school there.⁸ In November 1534 he married Eleanor, second daughter of Anthony Catesby of Whiston. They had three children, Thomas, William, and Mary, the first of whom was born in September 1543. According to an Inquisition on John's death, both he and his wife died on 27 May, 1546,⁹ so perhaps they were victims of the plague then raging in the county. Their elder son Thomas was then less than three years old. It has been often stated, without any evidence, that advantage was taken of Thomas' tender age to bring him up a Protestant. This is most unlikely, as his wardship was purchased by Sir Robert Throckmorton of Coughton (Warwicks.), and it was at Coughton, one of the most Catholic houses in England, presided over by Catherine Vaux, that he was brought up.¹⁰ He married Sir Robert's daughter Muriel and had eleven children, three of whom died in infancy. When his grandfather died in March 1559¹¹ he succeeded to a very large inheritance at the age of fifteen and a half. He trained for the law in the Middle Temple from 1560 till 1568,¹² but his

The first object of the present work is to give a full and complete account of the history of the British Empire, from its origin to the present time. It is divided into three parts: the first part contains a general history of the Empire, from its origin to the present time; the second part contains a particular history of each of the principal parts of the Empire; and the third part contains a general history of the Empire, from its origin to the present time.

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real interests were theology, building and gardening. He was knighted at Kenilworth in 1575.¹³

In a letter written in later years he speaks of his friendship with William Lord Vaux "even from my cradle", and he must have been gratified when Vaux married his sister and drew even closer the bonds that had united these two great neighbouring families in kinship and friendship and fellow-suffering for more than a hundred years.

Mary Tresham was described by a contemporary as "a better hand at spending than at gathering",¹⁴ and this perhaps explains why, upon this marriage, Lord Vaux moved from his modest house at Irthlingborough to the huge mansion of Harrowden, where the next two children were born. This great house no longer exists, nor is there any description of it, but we may be sure that the magnificent Nicholas would not have been contented with anything much smaller than Hampton Court, and we have seen that in the time of William's father the household numbered forty-six. There were five children by this second marriage, George, Catherine, Edward, Muriel and Ambrose.

There is not much to record of William's public life during these early years. He had taken his seat in the Lords on 20 January, 1558, and was present about a dozen times in Mary's reign.¹⁵ Three days after her death he was appointed one of the noblemen to attend upon Elizabeth at her first coming from Hatfield to London, on that memorable journey when all the bishops went out to Highgate to kiss her hand.¹⁶ Following his father's example, he stayed away from Parliament for the next four years. He was thus absent in May 1559 when the few religious houses re-established under Mary were abolished, and in the following month when it was made a crime to say or hear Mass. It is significant that he appointed the Earl of Bedford, a staunch Protestant, as his proxy, to vote in his name on those crucial divisions that were to shape the religious policy of the government.¹⁷

Lord Vaux does not seem to have had much interest in politics. He inherited the humanist tradition from his father. He had an Elizabethan's love of music and the stage, and a countryman's love of hawking and hunting. He gave his patronage to strolling players and those engaged in the less cultured pastime of bear-baiting. For by law all fencers, bearwards, common players in

interludes, minstrels, jugglers, pedlers, tinkers and petty chapmen were considered and treated as vagabonds unless they belonged to some baron of the realm. Even before this statute was made in 1572 Lord Vaux was a patron of bearwards. In the Treasurer's accounts at Bristol is the item :

"1558-9 Paid by the commandment of Mr. Mayor and his brethren to my Lord Vaux's bearward for baiting his bears in the marsh— $3/4$."

Ipswich was a better proposition :

"1578 Jan 6. Item paid unto my Lord Vaux's servants being here with bears, by Mr. Bailiff's commandment— $6/8$."¹⁸

On Sunday, 23 April, 1581, Vaux's bearward was the occasion of a town and gown quarrel at Chesterton. Coming to Chesterton, over which the University claimed jurisdiction, he was given a licence to bait his bear by the local Constable, who, however, said to him : "It is very likely there will be resort of scholars and that Mr. Proctor will come to inhibit you, which if he do, you shall not need to obey his authority : I will bear you out."

Whereupon the bearward went ahead, and baited his bear "in sermon time between one and two of the clock in the afternoon." There was "a great multitude of young scholars" present, who should have been at church. This could not be tolerated and "Mr. Nevill, proctor of the University of Cambridge accompanied with Mr. Farr, tasker, Mr. Hutchenson, Mr. Farr junior and a beadle sent by Mr. Vicechancellor" came to Chesterton where they found the bear already "at stake". Their report says :

"Imprimis the bearward, asked by what authority etc. made answer that he was the Lord Vaux's man, and had further warrant from the Justices, whereupon the Proctor, alleging the same to be against the privilege of the University, and commanding this bearward to cease off from that disordered pastime and to attend upon the beadle, to whom he was committed for his appearance before Mr. Vicechancellor, this bearward at the first submitted himself, but afterwards, counselled and maintained by Richard Parris and John Daniel, Mr. Brakhen's man and others of Chesterton, he refused plainly to go with them.

"Item the said Richard Parris, brother to Thomas Parris high constable, in the name of the foresaid Thomas, for whom he alleged he was deputed constable, coming between the beadle and the bearward said that the beadle had nothing to do with the bearward and that the bearward should not go with him, but be his prisoner, and if he had committed any offence they had to carry him before a Justice and not before the Vicechancellor, at which time this Parris and John Daniel . . . with others whose names are not known unto us, violently shoved and thrust the beadle upon the bear in sort that he could hardly keep himself from hurt, and so after conveyed the bearward away . . . The proctor then charged the constable for the forthcoming of the bearward, whereto the constable answered that the proctor was much deceived so to charge him, for neither could the proctor charge him, and being charged he was to answer before a Justice and not before the Vicechancellor, whereunto he added contumelious speeches, terming the proctor a petty officer and the vicechancellor's man, whereat the standers-by of his own company began to shout and laugh at the proctor."¹⁹

We need only add that this evidence was all sent up to Lord Burghley, who was Chancellor of the University, together with a beautifully written account in the Vicechancellor's best Latin.²⁰ Thomas and Richard Parris soon found themselves in the Gatehouse, whence they wrote Burghley a most humble and repentant letter.²¹

Lord Vaux was also patron of a company of players. Gabriel Harvey, the critic, writing in 1579 says:—

"I suppose thou wilt go nigh hand shortly to send my Lord of Leicester's, or my Lord of Warwick's, Vaux's, or my Lord Rich's players, or some other start-up comedanties unto me for some new devised interlude, or some malconceived comedy, fit for the theatre, or some other painted stage, whereat thou and thy lively copemates in London may laugh their mouths and bellies full for pence or two pence apiece."²²

Contemptuous though he be, Harvey puts Vaux's players on the same footing as the famous company of the Earl of Leicester,

which was later to number in its ranks a rising actor named William Shakespeare. Vaux's players continued long after their patron's death. They were playing at Leicester in 1601-2, at Coventry in 1604 and 1608, and at Skipton Castle, Craven in 1609.²³

Vaux would not, of course, have been a true Elizabethan if he had not been frequently in the law-courts. The earliest case is in April 1562 when Agnes, widow of George Acworth, of Potton (Beds.) sued him in Chancery for debts incurred by his father. He was ordered to appear in person on 6 May, but here as in most suits the judgement is not recorded.²⁴

About 1576 his sister Maud and her husband Anthony Burgh or Borrowes sued him in the same court for lands in Irthlingborough, Irchester, Laxton (Northants.) and other property, bequeathed by their mother Elizabeth to her children. They claim that William has kept her will a secret and pretended that it was not found in any Inquisition, and their repeated requests to see the will have been fruitless.²⁵

But these cases were only minor annoyances that would hardly ruffle the serene and care-free life of the Lord of Harrowden.

What little evidence there is goes to show that, in the early years of the reign, Vaux was not only a Catholic at heart, but was practising his religion in secret. In 1572 a spy named Herle wrote to his master, Lord Burghley :

"There is one Douglas in prison, committed by the bishop, who is a priest and hath changed his habits, having £10 a year pension of the Lord Vaux ; which priest lives very gentleman-like in this town, resorting familiarly to the French Ambassador and is favoured of a great number of papists."²⁶

This priest bore the then unusual name of Patrick. His annuity is mentioned in a deed dated 10 February, 1571, which also refers to a grant made to him on 14 December, 1565.²⁷ His signature occurs on a deed preserved at Harrowden, dated 1 October, 1566. This stray reference to Douglas, in a legal settlement covering several square yards of parchment, assumes a unique importance, for it is the link that unites succeeding generations of the family with their Catholic past.

II.

In 1567 or 1568 occurred an event that was to have a far-reaching influence on the whole fortunes of the Vaux family. Lord Vaux's eldest son Henry was then a studious, precocious little boy of nine, and his father looked for a worthy tutor. His choice fell upon the most promising young orator of the day, the idol of Oxford, no less a scholar than Edmund Campion. It is difficult to exaggerate the influence that Campion was exercising in the university; the students hung on his words, copied his gestures, his gait and even his diet, and were proud to be known as "Campionists". He was invited to Harrowden where he spent several months, and later wrote a long, graceful Latin letter to the little boy, of which I give a literal, rather than graceful translation.

"Edmund Campion to the Hon. Henry Vaux
Salutem dico plurimam.

"From the day your Father first asked me to see you and to superintend your education I have become amazingly attached to you. For I marvelled and was almost perplexed when I saw a boy who had not yet completed his ninth year, scion of a notable family, of such pleasant demeanour and refinement; who wrote and spoke Latin so well; who was equally good at prose and verse, accurate and quick at figures, devoted to the study of letters, diligent in application, able to sketch out and arrange his whole course of study. If circumstances had permitted it I should have desired nothing better than to give my enthusiastic help to that celebrated man, your Father, and to you, a boy of such great promise. But since some unknown Fate, yours and mine, has deprived you of me and me of you, your Father (by whom I am dearly loved, and whom I particularly revere) has easily persuaded me that my voice and advice should come to you.

"Generally speaking, in any one class of men there are very few who accomplish with praiseworthy passage the round of the fine arts. But among men of your rank we very seldom come across any who have even a slight acquaintance with literature. Many are overburdened with leisure; they concern themselves with trifles, waste the possessions of others and squander their own; they ruin their prime of life with women

and pleasure. All the more rightly, then, do I congratulate you on your intellectual outlook, your distinguished Father, your Grandmother, your relations and kinsfolk : all of them are and were your teachers. I congratulate you on the result of their teaching, namely, that you truly count it a thing admirable and splendid, excellent and glorious, to consider the ornaments of virtue and not fleeting imaginings to be the real fame ; not to waste your talents in idleness, not to gamble away your life, not to be puffed up, not to live licentiously and for pleasure ; but to serve God, to avoid vicious practices, to seek the best in culture and in art.

“Consider well the course you have chosen, how you are going, whither you are voyaging. You have sailed out of the rough waters of elementary studies : away as ’twere from the rocks and shoals of the coast-line. And now with billowing sails and a favourable breeze you see as if from afar the harbour of your desires. Speed the ship !

“In your own family you have examples to imitate or to emulate : your Grandfather, your Mother, your Sister. Your Grandfather, a man of very wide and expert knowledge of classical and humanistic literature has enriched our English language by poetical compositions in various modes. Your Mother was noted for her admirable shrewdness, her natural ability, and her holiness of life. Your Sister is your rival in study and in work. She shares the same intellectual interests. And I warn you that if you underrate her now, even a little bit, and take things easy, she will achieve renown before and triumph over you.

“Exert yourself, then, all the more and strive for this : to keep flying the flag of promise which you carry, and to urge on that very learned and in every way accomplished lady, your Sister, who is now running her course of her own accord. If you follow this path, you and your sister will be a matchless pair ; you will reach the delights you so eagerly seek for, you will shine with marvellous lustre, you will be filled with the desire to do your duty and act generously, and you will be surrounded by fame and affection in the sight of all men.

“Beware of pride, be modest always, associate with good companions and avoid the company of the wicked like the plague. Love God and serve Him. Honour your parents.

Treat your elders with respect and your equals with courtesy.

"A more illustrious example of affability and integrity than your Father I do not think it is possible for you to see. Take him as your pattern. During the period of several months when I was a guest at your Father's house, his daily speech and intimate conversation brought home to me the great work he was doing for all men of learning. I was much impressed by his pleasant and easy manner, his anxious and solicitous care for you all, and the fatherly pride he took in your natural gifts. And although I have been separated from him longer than I anticipated, (not my by own wish, but by reason of my way of life), still I shall never cease to wish and to will you well, you and your family, by whom I am so sumptuously maintained and so honourably encouraged. Farewell.

Oxford, 28 July, 1570."²⁸

Apart from the charming picture it gives us of the cultured life of Vaux's house, and the deep friendship between Campion and the whole family, that seems to have been long-standing, there are other points of interest in this letter. Even making allowances for the studied politeness of the time, it represents Lord Vaux as a patron of letters, and the last sentence seems to mean that he was Campion's patron as well. It is also interesting to find that the poems of Thomas Lord Vaux were known to Campion, and apparently well known to others, some years before most of them were printed in 1576. Henry Vaux's Latin poem on the Passion of Christ, written when he was only thirteen, will help us understand why Campion marvelled at his young pupil. In an appendix will also be found poems in English, two written at thirteen, which equally reveal his exceptional maturity. Finally there can be little doubt what the Fate was which deprived Campion and the little boy of each other's company.

Campion's faith in the Anglican Settlement had been waning for some time. In August 1569 he had sacrificed his brilliant career at Oxford rather than preach no-popery sermons at St. Paul's Cross. He had been ordained deacon, and in March 1569 he was given the vicarage of Sherborne (Glos.) by his great friend Richard Cheney, Bishop of Gloucester. He held it nominally till March 1571.²⁹ But by then he had decided to

throw up entirely his promising future, and to become a popish priest. What part his stay at Harrowden played in that momentous decision we have no means of determining, but what this friendship cost the Vaux family is the main burden of this book.

III.

In November 1569 the Northern Rebellion broke out, and the Oath of Uniformity was immediately tendered to all in official positions, including Justices of the Peace. They had to acknowledge that it was their bounden duty "to observe the contents of the Act of Parliament entitled An Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer and Service in the Church and the Administration of the Sacraments." They formally promised "that every one of us and our families will and shall repair and resort at all times convenient to our parish church . . . and there shall devoutly and duly hear and take part of the same common prayer, and all other divine service, and shall also receive the Holy Sacrament from time to time, etc." Lord Vaux, together with Bishop Scambler, and all the Justices in the County subscribed to this on 18 November.³⁰ Nor was he the only suspected papist to do so. In almost every county men who had been known papists before, and were soon to be so again, signed a similar document. There were hardly any who refused. It is impossible at this distance of time to account for this sudden and almost unanimous submission to the Queen. It is not the weakness of an individual here and there, but the agreed policy of them all. Possibly the oath was regarded and received as a mere protestation of loyalty in temporal matters. At all events there is no evidence that the attendance at church which they all had promised was forthcoming, and this subscription was never, apparently, urged against them.

It must have been during the Northern Rebellion, if indeed there is anything in the story, that four little children of the Percy family were sent out of the north in hampers to "old Dame Vaux of Harrowden", and became the basis of a claim to the Northumberland titles, first made in 1670 by one James Percy, a trunk-maker of Dublin, who declared he was descended from one of these Percy boys.³¹

Whatever Vaux's official submission might mean, there is no doubt that he was at this very time regarded as a Catholic by his contemporaries. He was listed among the Catholic Peers in 1567,³² and as a supporter of the Scottish Queen in 1568.³³ When Ridolfi hatched his plot in 1571 to put her on the throne, he named Vaux as one of the forty noblemen who professed to be only waiting for an opportunity to declare in arms against Elizabeth, though it is by no means certain that Vaux was ever consulted.³⁴

But this suspicion of popery did not interfere with his holding small offices of trust. He was a Commissioner for Musters in 1569 and 1570,³⁵ and he served on the commission for gaol delivery in 1578 and 1579.³⁶ If he was seldom in Parliament or at the court it was not because he was out of favour, but rather because he preferred the culture and county pursuits of his own house.

The study of Elizabethan England is a study in contrasts, and there is no greater contrast to be found than that between the glamour of the court and the plight of the poor. Ever since the changeover from agriculture to sheep-farming, mentioned in the first chapter; ever since the enclosures and the destruction of the monasteries, the number of homeless, workless and hungry vagabonds had been steadily increasing. Henry VIII as early as 1530, had grappled with the problem in his usual, energetic way. His solution was an "Act concerning punishment of beggars and vagabonds," and he drafted it himself. It ordered, as a deterrent, that anyone, man or woman, who wandered without a license beyond specified limits was

"to be tied to the end of a cart naked and to be beaten with whips throughout the same market town or other place till his body be bloody by reason of such whipping . . . and if the person so whipped be an idle person and no common beggar then after such whipping he shall be kept in the stocks till he hath found surety to go to service or else to labour after the discretion of the J.P. etc."³⁷

This law was confirmed under Edward VI in 1550, remained in force under Mary, and was again confirmed by Elizabeth in 1563. That it was no dead letter is shown by the many pathetic certificates that still remain.

Three women were whipped in the open market at Peterborough on the feast of Our Lady's Annunciation, 1569, and the certificate is signed by Bishop Scambler.³⁸ Next day five men and two women received the same punishment at Higham Ferrers. In the following January Davie Priger and Margaret his wife and Agnes Goodman were being corrected at Fawsley, while the same day two other men and their wives were whipped at Towcester.³⁹ The same happened again at Fawsley on 22 August, 1571, when eight men and one woman were punished "by stocking, with sharp and severe whipping."⁴⁰

Yet as this did not cure their poverty, on 27 August, 1571 the Privy Council required that "certificates of all the vagabonds, rogues and mighty valiant beggars, men and women" who had been "examined, whipped, stocked and punished, according to the law" should be duly made out and sent up to them.

At Polebrook three men, and at Bulwick three women and two men, were stocked and whipped on 18 September, 1571.⁴¹ The Corby list of 12 October, signed by Edmund Brudenell, includes "Thomas Addington taken at Stoke Doyle, being a poor lame man, was there punished and Elizabeth Grymes widow having two children." On the same day, the vagabonds punished at Fawsley were one man and six women.⁴²

Finally there is a certificate of all vagabonds taken within the hundreds of Harbottle, Corby, Higham Ferrers and Hamford Hoo and punished at Kettering, 28 March, 1572.

"George Croftes and Anne his wife with four small children, taken at Geddington and punished at Kettering according to the laws.

Francis Morris taken at Wakley [Weekley] and punished at Kettering according to the laws, and sent to Brawnston in the county of Leicester where he was born.

Francis Tatum taken at Weston and punished at Kettering according to the laws, sent to London where he last dwelt.

William London taken at Weston aforesaid punished etc. and sent to Leicester where he dwelleth.

Thomas Dod and Margaret his wife taken at Luffwick [Lowick], punished at Kettering according to the laws, sent to Chepstone in Monmouthshire where they last dwelt.

Margaret Whitney taken at Kettering with her children and

punished according to the laws and sent to Rothwell where she was born.

Katherine Hollam taken at Luffwick and punished at Kettering according to the laws and sent to Peterborough.

Richard Marshall taken at Wellingborough and sent to Milton in the county of Bedford."

This certificate is signed by two neighbours of great wealth and refinement—Edward Montague of Boughton, and Lord Vaux of Harrowden.⁴³

Not one of these unfortunate victims is accused of any offence beyond being a rogue and a vagabond. A rogue at this date meant only a vagrant; it is not surprising that it very soon took on a more sinister meaning. Not one of these is accused even of the new crime of begging, and the case of Margaret Whitney, who had wandered no more than five miles, shows how narrow were the limits that hedged them in. In 1572 a new law imposed the following penalties. For the first offence to be imprisoned till the Quarter Sessions, to be grievously whipped, to have the gristle of the right ear burnt with a hot iron "of the compass of an inch about"; second offence, to suffer as a felon; third offence, death. But children under fourteen might only be whipped and stocked, taken away from their parents, and forced into service.⁴⁴ There are no later certificates for this county, so it is impossible to say whether this law was ever carried out here in all its severity.

IV

Among Sir Thomas Tresham's early and less successful building operations was a muniment room, built prior to 1576. In it were stored all his legal documents, including bonds between him and Lord Vaux, amounting in all to £10,000. Alas the damp got in, and when the deeds were examined, many were found to be "greatly torn, wasted and defaced, and in many places not legible". Lord Vaux among others was present at Rushton on 17 July, 1576 when new copies were made. But this precaution did not altogether suffice, and a dispute over a deed concerning Great Houghton which was at the bottom of the box and much damaged, led to the longest of the many long law-suits in which Tresham became involved. The documents⁴⁵

connected with this dispute are most important for the early life of Tresham, but the case is mentioned here only as another instance of the friendly relations existing between the two neighbours.

There is at this time no hint of the tribulation that was soon to afflict both families. They lived in harmony with their neighbours, Tresham studying theology and mysticism, and Vaux keeping up the tradition of humanism received from his father, and taking pride in the education of his children. The court roll for the Hundred of Orlingbury for the years 1565-1602 is still extant,⁴⁶ and gives a vivid picture of the little community, before ever-growing bureaucracy destroyed its autonomy and initiative. The whole book breathes the sweet peace and the eternal problems of the countryside. Local laws are made suitable to local conditions: laws for instance that order every collier to buy yearly one load of wood and one load of firs and to have them in his yard by Michaelmas; the firs must not be carried "on their necks in burdens, nor any otherwise than on carts." "Every man shall take up his ploughing yearly at or before the feast of Saint Martin the Bishop in winter [Nov. 11]"; there shall be no flocks under the number of ten score sheep, and no shepherd shall break up any several field with his flock before the most part of the township be agreed thereunto. No collier may keep more than two kine, nor suffer his geese to go in the several fields, and "none shall take any couples to fold of foreigners"; "everyone shall make their mounds sufficient by Holyrood commonly called May Day," and "none shall buy any other grass but their own before harvest be inned." The laws were enforced by fines varying from 13/4 for keeping less than ten score sheep, to 2d. charged to Thomas Haunch of Orlingbury "for a little dunghill lying in the street."

Even the actions of the Lord of the Manor did not go unchallenged. Under Harrowden Parva in 1575 we read:

"We do find that the Right Honourable William Lord Vaux, Lord Harrowden and Mr. Shugborough of Harrowden aforesaid have given their consent and hath procured William Hawich a licence from the Justices to build a house upon a piece of ground in Harrowden. Whether it stand good in law or not we know not."

His conduct was questioned, in July 1579, by a more important body. Vaux and Sir Edward Montague had presumed to bail two servants of Simon Montague who were caught poaching at Brigstock. The Privy Council wrote to Lord Zouch and others to order that these two offenders "be informed that the Council marvel that they, not being commissioners in this matter, should bail any such" and required the poachers to be delivered again into gaol.⁴⁷ But this was only a passing cloud.

By a deed dated 10 February, 1571⁴⁸ Lord Vaux had entrusted the four children of his first marriage to the custody of their grandmother, Elizabeth Beaumont, for a period of ten years. He agreed to pay £20 a year for Henry, and £10 for each of the daughters. So it was presumably at Grace Dieu in Leicestershire (now a Catholic school) that Henry Vaux and his sisters completed those classical studies that had been so graciously stimulated by Edmund Campion. Lord Vaux continued to reside at Harrowden with his second wife and the five young children of this second marriage, the youngest of whom (Ambrose) was born in July 1569. There was also growing up in the village a boy named Matthew Kellison, son of a servant and tenant of Lord Vaux, and born in 1561.⁴⁹ He was destined to become one of the best known of the presidents of the Seminary at Douai.

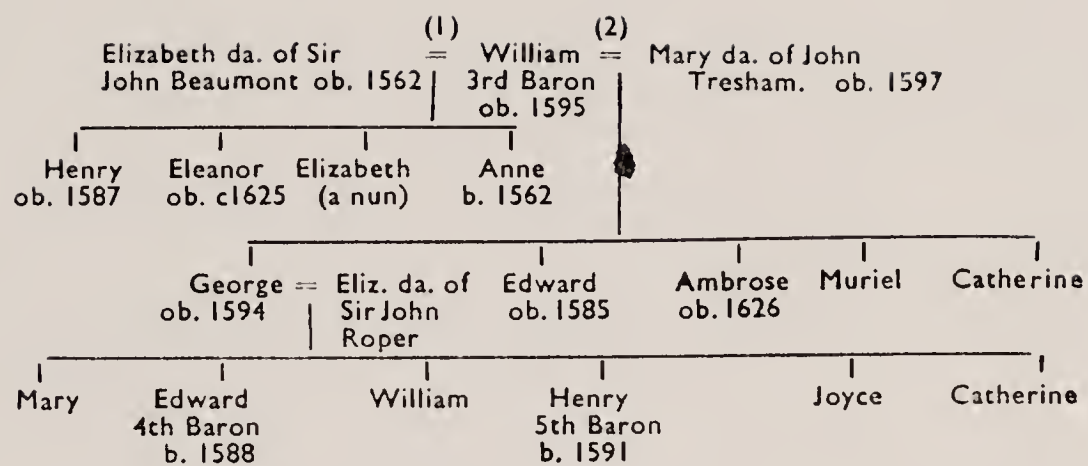
Thus the second decade of Elizabeth's reign came to an end, and Harrowden Hall was still at peace. The cruel laws against Catholics had not yet been felt in this remote spot. Perhaps Lord Vaux had some forebodings of the dark days to come, when his thoughts turned to the charming scholar and friend who had tutored his eldest children, and was now so far away in Bohemia. But for the moment all was peace and calm. It was the calm before the storm. The storm broke at Harrowden, with a crash that was heard all over Europe, when Edmund Campion returned to England, a Jesuit.

PART II

WINTER'S POWERFUL WIND

*The higher that the Cedar tree, under the heavens do grow,
The more in danger is the top, when sturdy winds can blow.*

THOMAS VAUX.



CHAPTER I

THE PRINCELY EAGLE

I

ON 12 June, 1580, there landed at Dover a soldier whose military bearing and swagger allayed all suspicion, and thus the watch let slip through their hands Father Robert Persons, the celebrated Jesuit. He made his way to London without incident, but in Southwark he found people chary of taking in strangers, and he looked in vain for a lodging. He therefore went to the Marshalsea prison and boldly asked for one Thomas Pound, who had been some years in prison for popery. Pound received him with joy, and that evening was able to introduce him to Edward Brookesby, the husband of Eleanor Vaux. The first obstacle was surmounted : he had made contact with the Catholic gentry.¹

On 25 June there landed also at Dover a merchant travelling in precious stones. But now the watch was awake. They had information that Gabriel Allen, brother of the founder of Douai College, was to try to sneak into England. The merchant answered the description and was arrested. He protested that they had made a mistake, and was prepared to take his oath that he was not Gabriel Allen. After some delay he was allowed to pass. The watch *had* made a mistake, for the merchant was Edmund Campion. There were friends on the look-out for him when he reached London, and he too was taken to Edward Brookesby.²

There was already in England an organization of young Catholics of good families, whose object was to receive the newly-arrived priests, provide them with horses, money, clothing, and Mass equipment, and to conduct them personally to Catholic houses. The leader was a Mr. George Gilbert, aged twenty-three, a convert from puritanism, who had known Persons in Rome. Among its members were Edward Brookesby, William Tresham (brother of Sir Thomas), and Henry Vaux, Campion's little friend, now about twenty-one.³

It was a tragedy that the arrival of these missionaries coincided with an armed, and papally-backed expedition against Ireland. It was natural that the English government should associate the two, and proclaim that these priests came to England to prepare the ground for a Spanish invasion. Time was to show that, with very few exceptions, the seminary priests kept aloof from the political struggle, and were concerned purely with their priestly work. They openly professed, even on the scaffold, their loyalty to the Queen in temporal matters, and were ready to swear it on oath. But nothing would satisfy the Queen but the oath of Supremacy, which declared that she was supreme in spiritual matters, and no Catholic could, of course, agree to this. Their very refusal to take this oath is a proof of their loyalty. Had they been unscrupulous conspirators they would surely have taken every oath that was offered them, and attended Protestant worship with the utmost show of piety. But in 1580 they had not had time to vindicate their loyalty, and the government felt the apprehension that every tyrannical government must feel when the oppressed show signs of reviving.

The arrival of the two Jesuits, and their enthusiastic reception could not long remain a secret, and on 18 July they thought it prudent to retire from London. They went to Hoxton, then a village and a fashionable residential area. Among those who had houses there were Sir Thomas Tresham and William Catesby. It was here that Campion penned his famous "Brag," which was meant to be published only in the event of his capture, but which got noised abroad, and made the government all the more anxious for his arrest. Persons claims to have reconciled to the Church a number of people at Hoxton, including Tresham and Catesby.⁴ As far as concerns Tresham this could scarcely have been more than a formality. All the evidence goes to show that he was brought up a Catholic, and was practising as one some years before this date.

Early in August, when news came of the invasion of Ireland, the government struck the first blow. They ordered the principal Catholics to be arrested and imprisoned in castles specially set apart for that purpose. According to the Spanish Ambassador they comprised four earls, five barons, and three hundred gentlemen.⁵ This is probably an exaggeration, and in any case many of them were allowed to be prisoners in their own houses

or in those of friends.⁶ Writing many years afterwards Fr. Persons gives, among those arrested at this time, the names of Lord Vaux, Sir Thomas Tresham, and William Catesby, but his memory seems to have played him false.⁷ The only names from Northamptonshire on Burghley's list⁸ are Tresham and William Brudenell, and there is no evidence that either was actually sent for. Certainly Lord Vaux was not yet in trouble. He signed the certificate of musters in the county on 22 September 1580;⁹ he attended parliament on 19 January 1581, and regularly till the end of March. It was this session that passed the *Act of Persuasion* making it high treason to be reconciled to the Romish religion, and misprision of treason to aid or maintain a person so reconciled. The fine for non-attendance at protestant services was stepped up from one shilling for each offence to the crushing burden of £20 per lunar month, for all over the age of sixteen. The penalty for saying Mass was a year's imprisonment and a fine of 200 marks; for hearing Mass a year's imprisonment and a fine of 100 marks. Those who kept a recusant schoolmaster forfeited £10 per month, and the schoolmaster was disabled from teaching and suffered a year's imprisonment.

It is not till May 1581, that Vaux makes his first appearance as a Recusant. In the Visitation book of the archdeacon of Northampton, under Harrowden Magna, on a page much damaged by damp, is the entry :

"We do present the right honourable William Lord Harrowden, his household and familiars and divers servants not to frequent the parish church of Harrowden aforesaid nor receive the holy communion in the parish afore rehearsed a small number or very few etc [*sic*]. Also we present my Lord's schoolmaster. His honour did claim his house to be a parish by itself as one of the churchwardens affirmeth."

On the same page is a reference to one of his servants Athanatius Carrington :

"Item we present Athony Carrington's child being borne before shrovetide last not to be baptized nor presented to the congregation, nor the said Athony's wife churched nor repaired to the church since the said deliverance."¹⁰

Vaux's plea of being a separate parish was on the strength of

having a private chapel, within a few yards of the parish church. The whole extract leaves one with the impression that the practice of popery at Harrowden had not just begun.

Campion has himself left us a description of his life in England, during the first laborious months of his apostolate :

"Well, I came to London, and my good angel guided me into the same house that had harboured Fr. Robert [Persons] before, whither young gentlemen came to me on every hand. They embrace me, reapparel me, furnish me, weapon me, and convey me out of the city. I ride about some piece of the country every day. The harvest is wonderful great. On horseback I meditate my sermon ; when I come to the house I polish it. Then I talk with such as come to speak with me, or hear their confessions. In the morning after Mass I preach ; they hear with exceeding gladness, and very often receive the Sacrament, for the ministration whereof we are ever well assisted by priests, whom we find in every place, whereby both the people is well served, and we much eased in our charge . . . I cannot long escape the hands of the heretics ; the enemies have so many eyes, so many tongues, so many scouts and crafts. I am in apparel to myself very ridiculous ; I often change it, and my name also. I read letters some times myself that in the first front tell news that Campion is taken, which, noised in every place where I come, so filleth my ears with the sound thereof, that fear itself hath taken away all fear. My soul is in mine own hands ever . . . At the very writing hereof the persecution rages most cruelly. The house where I am is sad ; no talk but of death, flight, prison, or spoil of their friends ; nevertheless they proceed with courage . . . There will never want in England men that will have care of their own salvation, nor such as shall advance other men's ; neither shall this Church here ever fail, so long as priests and pastors shall be found for their sheep, rage men and devil never so much."¹¹

II

Throughout the summer of 1580 Persons and Campion between them covered most of southern England. Persons toured the midlands, including Northamptonshire :¹² Campion

visited the counties west of London. At midsummer he was at the house of Mr. Robert Dormer at Wing (Bucks.), where he said Mass and preached.¹³ Thence he went to the house of Mrs. Yates at Lyford, some four miles north of Wantage. By the end of July he was in the neighbourhood of Faringdon. There is an indictment against Edmund Foster *alias* Edmund Campion, Francis Morris, gentleman, and Anne his wife, Edmund, Martha and Alice Morris, Alice Wicks of Ashbury, widow, and others to the number of thirty in all. The charge was that on 30 July, 1580, Campion "in a certain room within the mansion house of Great Coxwell, being vested in alb and other vestments according to papistical rites and ceremonies, did say and celebrate one private and detestable Mass in the Latin tongue, derogatory to the blood of Christ, and contrary to his due allegiance."¹⁴ There is a similar indictment (which does not, however, mention Campion), against Alice Wicks and others for Mass celebrated in the Manor house at Ashbury on 8 August.¹⁵ This house, complete with its moat, is now a farm house.

Campion returned to London about October and set out again soon after. We lose sight of him till Christmas, when he was staying with the Pierpoints at Thoresby, near Ollerton (Notts.). Thence he went by easy stages through Derbyshire into Yorkshire and Lancashire. He started his return journey about the middle of May 1581, and we next find him at Stonor Park, near Henley-on-Thames, where a secret printing press was producing his famous *Decem Rationes*. When Trinity term opened at Oxford, complimentary copies were found on the benches of St. Mary's Church. Of this little book, given away so freely that morning, only four copies are extant.

Campion was captured at Lyford (Berks.) on 17 July, 1581. He was conducted to London with every indignity and on the 22nd handed over to Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower. He remained in 'Little Ease' till the 25th, when he was carried by water to the house of the Earl of Leicester, who received him with great courtesy. On Sunday, 30 July, the Privy Council ordered him to be examined by Hopton, Norton the rack-master, and two divines.¹⁶ The register, with a significant *lapsus calami*, adds: "In case he continues wilfully to tell the truth, then to deal with him by the rack."¹⁷ He was accordingly tortured on two occasions before the week was out, probably on 31 July

and 1 August. It was on one of these occasions that he suffered the hideous "pricking" that had already been inflicted on Alexander Briant. His biographers are silent or sceptical about this, but there is strong evidence.

Writing on 5 August the Venetian Ambassador says: "They have inflicted torture on Campion, and not the ordinary torture; thrusting irons between his flesh and his nails, and have torn the nails off."¹⁸

On 12 August 1581, the Spanish Ambassador reports:

"The priests they succeed in capturing are treated with a variety of terrible tortures; amongst others is one torment that people in Spain imagine to be that which will be worked by Anti-Christ, as the most dreadfully cruel of them all. This is to drive iron spikes between the nails and the quick; and two priests in the Tower have been tortured in this way, one of them being Campion, of the Society of Jesus, who, with the other, was recently captured. I am assured that when they would not confess under this torture, the nails of their fingers and toes were turned back, all of which they suffered with great patience and humility."¹⁹

There are two witnesses, writing on 4 December, who report that when Campion was executed it was noticed that all his nails had been dragged out in the torture.²⁰ According to his friend Thomas Pound he was tortured not twice but three times before the end of August.²¹ In this state, alone and without books or pen and ink, he disputed with the most skilful antagonists that England could find.

Under the strain of this indescribable torment Campion, according to his torturers, betrayed the names of some of the Catholics who had given him shelter. Certainly by 2 August the Privy Council was in possession of a good deal of information as to his movements. On that day the Sheriff of Lancashire was instructed to search houses in that county, especially that of Mr. Houghton.²² On 4 August the Council register mentions a letter to the Earl of Huntingdon to search houses in Yorkshire "as are specified in their Lordships' letter unto him, that Edmund Campion, upon his examination here taken confessed that he hath been at" and to arrest those named in the Schedule.²³ The actual letter complete with the schedule is extant and proves that

at this date Burghley's information was as full and detailed as it was ever to be, at least as regards Yorkshire.²⁴ Similar instructions were sent to some other counties.

On 6 August a letter was sent to Sir Walter Mildmay, ordering him

"to send for the Lord Vaux (at whose house Edmund Campion hath, upon his examination, confessed that he hath been) and to examine him touching the said Campion's being there, or if one Persons, or any other Jesuit or priest etc., together with other particularities requisite for the understanding of all the particular actions of the said Campion etc. and after that he shall have examined him in this sort, then to send him to the house of some honest gentleman well affected in religion in that shire, to remain for a time under his charge, without having conference with any others."

The same was to be done with Sir Thomas Tresham, Mr. Griffith [Edward Griffin of Dingley and Braybrook], and also William Catesby, "if he shall be repaired into that shire." And, lest Catesby should remain at his other house in Warwickshire, a similar warrant was sent to Sir Thomas Lucy.

"And having finished the examinations of them all" the warrant to Mildmay concludes, "to command the gentlemen to whose custody they are committed to repair hither with them unto their Lordships, without suffering them to have in their journey any conference among themselves or with any others."²⁵

Vaux went first to Sir Walter Mildmay at Apethorpe, where he was interrogated, and then was sent to Boughton House, the seat of Sir Edward Montague, some six miles from Harrowden. It is clear from the letter which follows that Vaux and Montague were old friends: we have already seen them acting together, bailing poachers and whipping vagabonds. This new relationship must have been painful for both of them. The old friendship was nearly shattered by the action of one whom Vaux calls "my near neighbour, my nearer kinsman, and [here]tofore ever reputed good friend: I mean my cousin, William Lane."

"Madam", he writes to Lady Montague, or rather Tresham

writes for him, "I am advertised for truth that he [Lane] hath signified to you that upon my late committing to your husband's custody, that I since should have reported how evil my entertainment was in your house, and especially by you, and that so base and evil that I was almost famished for want of necessary relief of entertainment and diet. Which report being not delivered in secret, was offensively taken by you and yours and much sorrowed by mine, that I should raise so lewd a report in recompense of my then good entertainment, fit for a prisoner, as also of that which I many times erst have had at Boughton."

He speaks of her hospitality as being "sufficiently testified to the whole shire, to whose house I was always welcome, and so did I hold myself."

But he had one complaint, and the last paragraph of his letter is worth giving in full, as it shows how little bitterness there was at this date between an obstinate papist and a kindly, honest puritan.

"I think good to unfold to you some unkindness which I conceived of you at my last being in your company, which was your somewhat too zealous (I will not otherwise term the same) urging me in matters tending to religion: which the rather I noted because you were not accustomed so to deal with me, and then too, I being a prisoner for like causes in your house. But specially for that you, being of such modesty and withal so oft reading the scriptures, would so sharply reason with me, and that in the presence of your husband; since St. Paul admonisheth that women should learn in silence and in subjection: and that in their houses they themselves should learn by demanding of their husbands; who doth not permit them to teach in their presence, but to be in silence. For silence extolleth womanly shamefastness and such comely shamefastness adorneth their age. At which time, Madam, if I anything, as haply in reply I might, offend you, I pray pardon thereof; for I had no intention to minister offence to you; and what then passed from you to me, God forgive me as I therein forgive you, to whom and to your good husband being most friendly commended, not doubting but we shall many times meet and be merry."

Lord Vaux was escorted to London by Sir Edward Montague's son, and in a postscript to the same letter he writes :

"I must acknowledge your son his well usage of me, little thinking to have found such sufficiency in one of his years, to wield to so good effect a thing so strange to him : to whom I pray you vouchsafe me heartily commended."²⁶

On Friday, August 18th at Leicester House, before the Lord Treasurer (Burghley), the Lord Chamberlain (Earl of Sussex), and the Earl of Leicester, "the Lord Vaux and Sir Thomas Tresham, knight, being sent for and severally, in her Majesty's name, required whether they would swear to their knowledge and thinking that Campion the Jesuit was at their houses, according to his confession, or no, refused to take an oath so propounded on her Majesty's behalf unto them, and thereupon were committed close prisoners to the Fleet."²⁷

The Privy Council normally sent their prisoners to the Marshalsea, but those who could afford to pay exorbitantly for their keep were often allowed to go to the Fleet, much to the disgust of the Marshal of the Marshalsea, who thereby lost the principal part of his income.²⁸ Conditions in the Fleet were tolerable in comparison with other prisons. Prisoners were allowed a servant, could order their own food, see their friends, have books and writing materials, and, though locked up at night in separate cells, could meet during the day at specified hours, and sometimes they dined together. Even close prisoners, who were supposed to be in solitary confinement, enjoyed many of these privileges.

After a month, however, Tresham speaks of his "weak and oft sickly body," and later complains that his imprisonment is "close, noisome, and moist," with less liberty than was allowed to "brawlers, fighters, unthrifty and loose people" not to mention "pillory and most contentious prisoners."²⁹ On the other hand he was allowed some freedom, for there is a long account of a debate on the True Presence between Tresham and Dr. Lilly, Master of Baliol. This was held on Sunday, 3 September, after the prisoners—Vaux, Tresham, William Catesby, Shelley and Roper—had dined together with the wife of the deputy-warden.³⁰ "Dr. Lilly," says Fr. Persons, who confusedly places the event in 1580, "was sent to the Fleet to confer with Sir Thomas Tresham

but it was but ridiculous.”³¹ Tresham, however, writes to Lilly with every mark of courtesy and respect.

III

On 29 October the Privy Council ordered the Attorney-General and others to examine Campion and the other prisoners in the Tower “upon certain matters, and to put them unto the rack.” This was carried out on the 31st, and Campion was so brutally dealt with that three weeks later he was still unable to lift up his hand. It was after this racking that, asked how he felt his hands and feet, he replied : “Not ill, because not at all.”³² On 7 November Mendoza writes that Campion has not yet been brought to trial “as he is all dislocated and cannot move.”³³ It was not until 14 November that he and his companions were arraigned. They all pleaded not guilty.

The following day, Wednesday 15th, Lord Vaux and the other prisoners were brought to the Star Chamber. Among those present were Sir Thomas Bromley, Lord Chancellor, The Earl of Sussex (Thomas Radcliffe), The Earl of Leicester (Robert Dudley), Sir Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Christopher Wray, Chief Justice of England, Sir James Dyer, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Sir Roger Manwood, Chief Baron, and Sir Francis Knolles, Treasurer of the Queen’s Household.

“The prisoners at the bar were Lord Vaux, Sir Thomas Tresham, Mr. Walter Powdrell, of Hadham [Derby], Mrs. Jane Griffin, of Bucks., and her husband’s brother, Mr. Ambrose Griffin. All these came from the Fleet together, and were brought to the bar between nine and ten o’clock in the morning. Sir William Catesby was brought from the King’s Bench ; whose warning of coming thither was very late. The Lord Vaux and Sir Thomas Tresham had been heard before his coming to the Star Chamber.

“The Queen’s Counsel was Popham the Attorney-General, Egerton the Solicitor-General and Mr. Serjeant Anderson who (as I remember) spake nothing.”

After the usual tirade against the Pope, Popham proceeded to the charge of contempt of court.

"Then against the lord Vaux, Sir Thomas Tresham and Sir William Catesby, Popham further did give in evidence that they being examined thereof did deny it ; who being required by the counsel to confirm it by an oath, refused it ; who then charged them, upon their allegiance to swear, but they refused it : whereupon he urged the contempt, but he neither produced for it warrant of law or precedent . . .

"The evidence read in that behalf was a confession of Mr. Campion's at the rack, the [blank] of August last etc. before the lieutenant of the Tower, Norton and Hammon. The content whereof was that he had been at the house of the Lord Vaux sundry times, at Sir Thomas Tresham's house, at Mr. Griffin's of Northamptonshire where also the Lady Tresham then was, and at the house of Sir William Catesby, where Sir Thomas Tresham and his lady then was. Also at one time when he was at the Lord Vaux's he said that the Lord Compton was there, but not mentioning conference with them or the like.

"Also to enforce this there was a letter produced, said to be intercepted, which Mr. Campion should seem to write to a fellow-prisoner of his, namely Mr. Pound ; wherein he did take notice that by frailty he had confessed of some houses where he had been, which now he repented him, and desired Mr. Pound to beg him pardon of the Catholics therein, saying that in this he only rejoiced, that he had discovered no things of secret.

"Then the court demanded of the Lord Vaux what he could answer therein, and whether he confessed or denied this to be true which for the queen had been given in evidence against him.

"Lord Vaux, making an humble and lowly obedience, offered to speak ; but Lord Leicester (as it seemed) disliking of some want of duty or reverence therein, something said (as we guessed) touching the same to the Lord Chancellor.

"LORD CHANCELLOR My Lord, doth it become you so unreverently to presume to make answer with only bowing of your head, in so high an offence as this is that you have committed against her majesty ? No, it little beseemeth you, and greatly is to be disliked.

"LORD VAUX My lords all, if I have failed in any part of

my duty, I humbly pray pardon ; for I had intention not to offend therein (God is my judge). And the rather I hope you will pardon it in me, who through ignorance have committed this error, being erst never acquainted with the answering of any like cause in this or any other court. (All this he spake upon his knee ; and so continued kneeling all the time of his answer, and so likewise the residue).

“LD. CHAN. Answer to the matter that her majesty’s attorney hath charged you withal. Do you confess it or deny it ?

“LD. V. My lords, I acknowledge all to be true that I am charged withal concerning my refusal to swear, and withal do affirm my examination, taken before Sir Walter Mildmay, to be true ; offering now, as always heretofore I have done, to depose to any interrogations that concern my loyalty to her majesty, or duty to the State, requiring only to be exempted from deposing in matters of conscience, which without offending of my conscience grievously, I may not consent to do : with further offer that if I be not a most true and faithful subject to her majesty, show me no favour, but cut me off forthwith ; at whose commandment my goods, my lands and my life ever hath been and ever shall be ready in all duty to be employed. And as to the receiving of Mr. Campion (albeit I confess he was schoolmaster to some of my boys) yet I deny that he was at my house. I say that he was not there to my knowledge, whereof reprove me [i.e. prove me false], and let me be punished with that punishment I deserve.

“LD. CHAN. You have denied it unsworn ; why do you refuse to swear it ? Nay, you were but required to say it upon your honour, and withal but to your knowledge ; and favour you had also showed you, that Campion’s examination in that point was read unto you, wherein he confessed to have been at your house.

“Lord Vaux answers that a nobleman’s affirmation on his honour is the same as an oath ; and he refused it for fear of its being impeached by untrue accusations.

“LD. CHAN. You see he hath said herein what he can. You may proceed with Sir Thomas Tresham.

“LD. VAUX Thus much I humbly pray, that if I have committed any offence herein, you would not impute it to

contemptuous obstinacy, but rather to fear of offending my conscience.

"LD. CHAN. Sir Thomas Tresham, what say you to that which Mr. Attorney-General hath charged you withal; is it true or false?"

"Sir Thomas Tresham, making humble and low reverence to the court, kneeled down upon his knee, and made his defence as followeth."

It is impossible to give here more than a summary of Tresham's long defence. He first asked them to "limit the times and places" of his receiving Campion. The attorney-general caused Campion's alleged confession to be read again, which, of course, mentions no places or dates.

Then Tresham remarks that "necessity now forceth me to plead my own defence, since none other will or may," adding that he is entirely inexperienced and unskilled in such matters, and that his many months' imprisonment "hath wrought no small alteration in me." He offers to answer to one or both of two points, viz. the receiving of Campion, and the "contemptuously refusing to swear." He is instructed to restrict his answer to the latter.

"Then I trust", answers Sir Thomas, "I am acquitted of the receiving of Mr. Campion, wherewith I was charged by Mr. Attorney, in that I have denied it, and am ready to yield proof thereof; and that your lordships will not have me to answer thereto, but to the contempt only."

Here follows a long disquisition on the nature of an oath and the conditions under which it is justifiable. One of the conditions is *judicium* or discretion.

"*Judicium* is requisite in an oath and an unadvised or improvident oath doth want judgment, which of necessity must be wanting if I depose herein. For if I swear falsely, I am perjured; if by my oath I accuse myself, I am condemned to the penalty of the law and displeasure of my prince, which is contrary to the law of nature *seipsum perdere* [to condemn oneself]. If I swear truly, then I lay myself wide open to perjury, because Mr. Campion hath oppositely accused me in the affirmative . . . Secondly, I should greatly sin uncharitably

to belie him, to make him and myself both guilty by my oath, who to my knowledge are most innocent."

There is much more to this effect, so much so that the Lord Chancellor wonders where he got it all from. Tresham replies that the answer is in his study where are the Bible, St. Augustine, Soto, Nauer, and the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas.

"You have greatly deceived me" said Lord Hunsdon. "I had thought you had not been so well studied in divinity as it now seemeth you are."

"My study is little", replied Tresham, "yet the most time I employed in study is in divinity, and very little had I profited if in so clear a case as this I could not have avouched express authority to prove this no contempt in refusing to swear."

Later the Lord Chancellor made the significant admission, hitherto kept from the prisoners, that Campion's confession was not on oath. Tresham's reply is that if Campion said it at all he would presumably be willing to swear to it. Thus there would be two contradictory testimonies, both on oath, and one of the parties must be convicted of perjury. Campion, being a priest and unlikely to swear falsely against a Catholic, and also swearing an affirmative, which is easier to prove, would be believed by a jury rather than Tresham and "haste me to the pillory, there infamously to lose my ears." "This ended Sir T. Tresham, all this time kneeling, did rise up, making a lowly and humble obeisance to the court."

Later on Sir Thomas said :

"At that time I was at Leicester House, when I was charged to have contemptuously refused to swear, I then made petition to you both, that in case I might see Mr. Campion, or hear him speak, where by his speech or face I might call him to remembrance, I then offered to depose, if I could call him to memory.

"LD. CHAN. You wanted discretion to make such a demand; and it was only delaying of time, for you were to answer only to your knowledge.

"SIR THOMAS TRESHAM By your favour, I was specially induced so to do : for as I had desire to satisfy you, so was I unwilling to minister foul blot of perjury. If by seeing him

I could call to memory that he had been at my house, then would I have deposed according to Mr. Campion's examination, whereby I should have avoided all scruple of perjury. For this Mr. Campion and I were never of much familiarity, so that in thirteen years' space he might grow out of my knowledge. Who never saw him in the university but once, before his departure beyond the seas. Who, as your lordship did say, stayed little with me, came much disguised in apparel, and altering his name. All which made me refuse to swear to my knowledge, lest haply he might have been in my house, and in my company both, I not knowing him; and yet that the same should be referred to a jury, who sometimes participate of affection or ignorance to judge whether I be perjured or no. Wherefore (as I have said) my desire was that by means of seeing him or hearing him, that I the better might remember him, which haply would have procured the full satisfying of you.

"LD. CHAN. I can see no reason why it should be granted you.

"SIR T. TRESHAM I now find mine own wants apparently, in that all seemeth unreasonable to your honours that I held for assured and grounded reason; and that the same doth aggravate my offence, which I thought would have freed me of this my fault; whereat I must needs sorrow, and learn to hold silence."

Mr. Powdrell admitted harbouring Campion, but protested that it was on 8 January, not the 12th, as Lord Shrewsbury (who examined him) had set down. This was important for the proclamation against Jesuits was published on 10 January. But he denied that he came "to the latter ending of the Mass." "But that I have received Mr. Campion, I have confessed it; and I hope I have not offended therein, for bestowing a night's lodging on him who sometime did read to me in the university, and by whom I did never know evil."

Next came Mrs. Jane Griffin or Griffith. She was the wife of William Griffith, Campion's host at Southland, near Uxbridge, a house rented from Sir George Peckham who lived nearby at Denham.³⁴ These Griffiths do not seem to be connected with the Griffins of Dingley (Northants), though Edward Griffin of Dingley was also arrested on the charge of harbouring Campion.³⁵

"By this time was Sir W. Catesby brought in from the King's Bench" and the confession and letter of Campion were read to him. He too denied that Campion had been in his house, but refused to swear it on oath.

"LD. HUNSDON Your lordships may see that this man hath been in another prison, yet both he and Sir T. Tresham tell one tale : you may perceive thereby that they have had both one schoolmaster."

Catesby agreed. Their schoolmaster had been God, who teacheth us to speak the truth.

Sir Walter Mildmay summed up, with some abuse of the "rabble of seminary men and runagate friars, who call themselves Jesuits." "Then he made show of the shires where Campion made his peregrination, nominating Northamptonshire, where he came to the houses of these prisoners at the bar ; and lastly unto Berkshire where he was apprehended." He was evidently of the opinion that Campion had visited Vaux and Tresham on his way back from the north and shortly before his capture. In the *Verbatim* report of this speech,³⁶ however, this detail does not occur : it is merely a turgid mixture of flatulent abuse of the Pope, and nauseating adulation of the Queen. In both reports his judgment is the same :

"First, I think them worthy that they should return to their prisons from whence they now came, and there to abide till they have conformed themselves to swear herein. Also that they should be punished with pecuniary pain, wherein I think it requisite that the Lord Vaux shall pay £1,000, Sir T. Tresham and Sir W. Catesby, each of them 1,000 marks [£666 13s. 4d] apiece. And for Mr. Powdrell, inasmuch as he confessed the receiving of Campion, and that his refusal to swear was only because he might not first see the interrogatories, I could wish his fine to be the less ; wherefore I think 500 marks sufficient for him."

Sir Roger Manwood thought they were being let off too lightly and wanted the fines at least doubled. Sir James Dyer agreed with Mildmay. Sir Christopher Wray thought the fines "very small in so great a case of state and importance as this was." Sir Francis Knollys "briefly spake to Sir T. Tresham's

argument, saying that he had been bred up in Popery, and also had the experience of the persecution in Queen Mary's time; and he was sure that in all that time they knew no such evasion for an oath as school-divinity." He too would have liked heavier fines.

Lord Norris also wanted the fines increased, while Lord Hunsdon "would have had Sir T. Tresham to be fined at the least £3,000, because Sir T. Tresham committed a greater offence in making of his public defence in court than he erst in refusing to swear, signifying that in his conscience he did verily think that Sir T. Tresham had studied and premeditated his argument forth of the Scripture and doctors more to incense the ears of so great an assembly, and thereby (as it were) to premonish all Catholics by his example how to answer, and how to behave themselves in like cases, than that he did it in defence of his own cause."

The Lord Chancellor "urged against the Lord Vaux that he was at full years at her majesty's coming to the crown: who at that time did his homage, whereto he was sworn; declaring that in the refusing to swear he had violated the same." He added that the prisoners should not be delivered without her majesty's special favour obtained first therein, and that all of them should be sent to the Fleet.³⁷

Thus sentence was passed, and still exists in the handwriting of Sir Thomas Egerton:

"They shall be committed to the Fleet, there to remain close prisoners, *until they shall conform themselves in obedience and duty towards her Majesty in the premisses*, and shall not be delivered by the order of this Court until her Highness' pleasure be therein specially known. And further that they shall pay for their fines, for the same offences, to the use of her Majesty as followeth, viz. The Lord Vaux, *a thousand pounds*, Sir Thomas Tresham *one thousand marks*, Sir William Catesby *one thousand marks*, Walter Powterell, Jane Griffin and Ambrose Griffin, every of them *five hundred marks* apiece."³⁸

IV

In addition to this long account of the trial, there are among Tresham's papers four large closely written pages, in Tresham's

own hand and heavily corrected, that form a rough draft of his defence.³⁹ Some paragraphs appear almost *verbatim* in the above report, but there are others that were evidently never spoken at the trial. If these latter do not represent what Tresham actually said, they certainly contain what he hoped to be allowed to say. The first paragraph suggests that these hurried notes were written during the trial, but as he later leaves a blank for his assailant's name, it seems certain that he was anticipating the prosecution, and hoped that his remarks would apply to whatever was urged against him.

"A long and filed speech hath been used to prove me little better than a traitor in this sort, etc. Which in outward show maketh semblance of a mountain and in truth not a mole-hill. For the matter seemeth heinous with supposing of some absurd fallacies, and by confused huddling of them together doth make his conclusion. It is so injudicious that if it were propounded in the disputations in the schools, the very boys would hiss the argument forth of their doors, and therefore I marvel you will use it before so honourable and prudent an assembly . . .

"Your argument is *a primo ad ultimum*, and this long chain of yours hath in it many false links, and your first link and your last, being so far asunder, must have some mean or middle links between them, to tie them together, although it hangeth not so well together as if it were tied together with points. Wherefor, if I grant you both the first and the last, how do you prove your *medius terminus* etc. ? . . .

"That Campion is a traitor is more than I know, and in matters doubtful I am bounden to judge the best. But admit he be so, it followeth not that he that is a traitor now always hath been so ; no more than he that seemeth to be most godless now, happily hath not always been so deemed. The accusation can go no further but what it was when I knew him (and thereto by him or by any other I have offered to depose). For if he had been then a traitor by any secret intention in himself, whereof I was never understanding, it was no offence in the receiving of him, unless he had been outlawed thereof or proclaimed or suchlike public notice, which the Law commandeth me to take notice of.

"But admit Campion hath always been a traitor, and withal unknown to me. I say I am not bounden to accuse him in matters of conscience. Yet I grant that he who will not accuse a traitor in matters of treason against his prince or country is a traitor. But he that will not accuse a traitor for that he fasted thrice a week with bread and water, or that hath been occupied whole nights in prayer, or hath done alms-deeds, or in execution of those mysteries of religion which in my soul I think absolutely good; he I say that will not accuse as a traitor for these causes only or suchlike, is neither offender nor traitor at all. And for my part I have been always examined of Mr. Campion concerning suchlike matters of religion, and not of state."

Having thus demolished his imaginary opponent with this devastating logic, and incidently given us some precious details of Campion's asceticism, he proceeds to develop at great length and with much learning the whole doctrine concerning lawful and unlawful oaths, proving his case by an amazing array of quotations from the Bible and the early Fathers. It seems almost beyond belief that he, a layman, could draw up such a treatise while suffering solitary confinement in the Fleet.

Two pages are devoted to answering possible objections. They are all full of interest but we have room here only for those that throw any light on the facts of the case. He points out the two evils that must follow from swearing "the thing that is true."

"First in doing it against my conscience is a wicked deed.

"Second in laying myself wide open to perjury, and that in two ways, most probably and apparently. The one to refer to a jury, who always be nor wise nor always honest, to judge by circumstances whether I be perjured or no, which if I may avoid I am more senseless than a Bedlam to commit so precious a thing to me as is my honest reputation to stand upon so casual a nicety, when I fear I have now more ill-wishers than ever I had, and more, I am assured, than I have deserved: when I twice have tasted of the displeasure of my judge: when I have known so monstrous verdicts pass, contrary to all expectation, and namely in our shire: when I myself have been beaten with juries: and when upon the sudden I have had sundry produced against me in open court, perjured

caitiffs most falsely to swear to my prejudice. Should I now swear that Mr. Campion to my knowledge was not at my house, who for these twenty years continually have kept house, wherein I have spent yearly a great part of the revenues left me by my ancestors ; where sometimes cometh to me as well strangers as my friends, 20, 40, 50, yea 100 at a time : where haply I know very few of them, and if I demand of their names I take them to be as they deliver them to me : where many times in the year, yea in the month, I let pass sundry of as good favour as by all semblance Mr. Campion should be, whose name I vouchsafed not once to demand. In which case Mr. Campion might have been in my company, might have been in my house, and also might have had conference with me, and notwithstanding pass from me unknown, he being one that I never had acquaintance withal not did ever speak to him above once, if I did that, in the university before his departure beyond the seas, which as I take it, is ten or twelve years since. And especially your Lordships say how that he came disguised from his vocation, and coming in a contrary name ; which being inferred against me, a disgraced man, that he being a priest and I a Catholic, and that he coming so far and such men being rare in this realm and most welcome to Catholics ; therefore most likely will the jury find me to be perjured, chiefly if the jury were of those disposed people that hold with us for enemies to Christ, and none of their family or society, and who accounteth it a sacrifice to annoy us what lieth in them. The proof of my perjury being apparent, right careless herein should I show myself to do the act myself, which foreseeing, it should much haste my ruin.

“The other is so apparent that it cannot be avoided but that I must to the pillory if I take this oath. Your Lordships say that Campion hath accused me before your honours, his accusation is under his hand, of record and extant, wherein he saith he was at my house, he lodged there, showing in what chamber he had conference with me and others, he said service etc. : he was carried thence by my wife to Mrs. Griffin’s with other the like. This accusation is direct, this in the affirmative, this is for the queen : if he hath said it, likely he again will affirm it : if he does not his accusation is of record, which is sufficient. Against this what am I to pretend but a

negative, which is a faint evidence though never so true. In this case what jury, nay what most indifferent jury would not find me guilty of perjury, and who most indifferent will not think it true, when he being a priest should accuse a Catholic? etc. Which things considered, it is notorious how I may hurt myself in this oath, and by no means further her Majesty's service, which if it might, *non facies malum ut inde veniat malum* [*sic* for *bonum*]."

Against the charge of possessing Campion's books he writes as follows :

"Campion is a native Englishman, was of great expectation in the university, and for his exercises there, and namely before her Majesty, he deserved among them great commendation. I have heard with my own ears of the Lords of her Majesty's council, well esteem of him. He departed beyond the seas for his further increasing of his knowledge and learning, which is usual. He demeaned himself so there that he procured great and general opinion for his singularity and ability. I never then heard any ill of him, nor till this day did, but I have heard him well reputed of, and that by protestants of good account that returned from the emperor's court. Yea, such public commendation he merited here in England, that the book wherein the same is published is vendible in Paul's Churchyard, and extant in every man's custody, which in Holinshed is so often avouched and so singularly commended that even to one of her Majesty's most honourable privy council, in the epistle dedicatory, among many other his commendation hath these words, in comparing him with Homer : that the realm might thirst for so rare a clerk as is Mr. Campion."

One of those that returned from the emperor's court, and who may have spoken to Tresham was Sir Philip Sidney, who met Campion in Prague.⁴⁰ The reference to Holinshed shows that Tresham was quoting from memory, for the passage he cites is to be found not in the Epistle Dedicatory (written by Holinshed himself), but in an Introduction to Campion's Description of Ireland, written by Richard Stanihurst, who speaks of Campion as "my fast friend and inward companion." Both Epistle and

Introduction are addressed to Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy General of Ireland. Stanihurst writes: ". . . how much more ought Ireland for to long and thirst after so rare a clerk as M. Campion."⁴¹ This Introduction was left out of the second edition of Holinshed in 1587.

Finally Tresham makes it clearer in this draft than he did at the trial, that he strongly suspected the authenticity of Campion's alleged confession:

"In this accusation there be sundry things to be noted, first if it be true and sufficient, then, that proved, what offence have I committed.

"First I deny it to be true, and pray herein no more favour than by our laws be granted to the most reprobate person of the world, what offender soever he be, that is, not to be condemned but by sufficient testimonies, and that they may be produced. Which request is lawful and in our law required, and which the Apostle himself in the 25 of the Acts, being arraigned and charged with sedition and suchlike [asked] that he might have his accusers produced . . . Wherefor, as the place is prepared, so I wish my accusers were present etc. For in justice three things must be, the accuser, the judge and the defendant: as the judge may not be my accuser, so may not I be both *actor* and *reus* [plaintiff and defendant].

"I take exceptions to Mr. Campion's depositions, that they all only be not sufficient to convict me, and because they seem to be such as should not likely pass from one of his calling, being a priest. I would not believe them to be his, but that in this honourable court they be produced. Notwithstanding I willingly would demand, if without offence I might, whether this his examination was in the time of his tortures or before or after, for if he hath confessed them through tortures, then may I take exceptions etc."

V

It is hardly necessary to say that this Star Chamber trial was a mere parody. Nobody who has studied Tudor law cases expects anything else. "The trials of the accused Catholics," wrote Macaulay, "were exactly like all state trials of those days: that is to say, as infamous as they could be . . . A state trial was

merely a murder preceded by the uttering of certain gibberish and the performance of certain mummeries."⁴²

But there are two questions of interest that arise out of it. First, how much was racked out of Campion, and secondly, why, out of the thirty-two people arrested on the charge of harbouring him, only Vaux, Tresham, and Catesby denied it.

If we may judge by the Schedule⁴³ sent to Yorkshire on 4 August, Burghley was by that date in possession of all the information that he was ever to have. This information, then, could not have been gathered from Campion's friends who were arrested only subsequently. Campion's biographer, Simpson, suggests that Gervase Pierrepont, who conducted Campion through Derbyshire might have been the first source of the information concerning that county.⁴⁴ This is impossible, because Pierrepont was not arrested till 14 August. Again he says: "All the facts about Lord Vaux, Tresham and the rest may easily have been obtained from Henry Tuke, servant to Lord Vaux."⁴⁵ This is an unwarranted slur on a faithful servant, for Tuke was not arrested till February, 1582.⁴⁶ It would seem, then, that Burghley's information came either from Campion himself, or from spies who were unusually well-informed. There are extant no spies' reports whatever concerning Campion's itinerary. From August, 1580, when he was indicted (in his absence) for saying Mass at Great Coxwell, till his arrest eleven months later, there is not a single reference to his whereabouts. This in itself is suspicious, and suggests that there may well have been documents that Burghley thought it better to destroy.

Equally suspicious is the monotonous frequency with which these letters from the Privy Council stress the fact that the information leading to the arrests was confessed by Campion: every letter has at least one reference to his confession, in striking contrast with the normal letters which never mention the source of the information supplied to the Council. From the very start it was Burghley's main object to discredit this popular hero by branding him as a coward. Later on, Norton, the rack-master was to praise the fortitude of Sherwin on the rack, and to contrast it with the timorous behaviour of Campion.⁴⁷ Owen Hopton, the Lieutenant of the Tower, said that Campion "had no cause to complain of racking, who had rather seen than felt the rack."⁴⁸ Every effort was made to make the world believe that at the

first show of torture he had been frightened into betraying his closest friends.

For a time this policy was successful. For a time even the Catholics seem to have lost confidence in him. But before the end of the year opinion had veered round in his favour.

The first event that shook the confidence of the public in the government story was the debate held in the Tower on 31 August. Rebutting a suggestion that he had been tortured "for matters of state and not for religion," Campion said:

"His punishment was for that he would not betray the places and persons with whom he had conversed and dealt with concerning the Catholic cause, alleging an example of primitive Christians who chose rather to abide martyrdom than that they would yield up the books which Catholic pastors had given and distributed among them. 'Much more,' said he, 'I ought to suffer anything rather than to betray the bodies of those who ministered necessities to supply my lack'." ⁴⁹

This is a Catholic account, but the version published by the Protestant disputants in 1583 is in substantial agreement. Campion is made to aver that on the rack he was "moved to confess in what places he had been conversant since his repair into the realm . . . [but] he might not betray his Catholic brethren, which were, as he said, the temples of the Holy Ghost."⁵⁰ Is it credible that an accomplished apologist like Campion would thus deliberately trail his coat, if he were conscious that he had in fact betrayed his friends? Still more strange is the reaction of the Protestants. Here was a golden opportunity for them to fling his confession in his teeth, but they let the challenge pass, and hastily changed the subject.

The second event was the trial of Vaux and the others in the Star Chamber. It must have been obvious to any impartial observer that the prosecution was afraid to produce Campion in open court. Even under Tudor law the accused had a right to be brought face to face with his accuser, but when Tresham asked that he might simply *see* Campion he was told he was wanting in discretion. They were likewise afraid to let anybody see the alleged intercepted letter to Pound. It is true that this letter was read a few days later at Campion's trial,⁵¹ and that he

did not deny its authenticity though he did not confirm it. He seemed to be doing everything to court ignominy and ridicule. He had shaved his head, and wore a great black nightcap covering half his face. He may perhaps have wished to avoid vindicating his personal courage against a charge that had no bearing on his indictment. Like all the other important documents in the case, this letter to Pound has disappeared without trace. Above all, the prosecution in the Star Chamber was afraid of exhibiting Campion's alleged confession. Here was a document of the utmost importance: the most damning evidence of Campion's frailty. But nobody was allowed to see it then, nobody claims to have seen it since, and Burghley neither published it nor preserved even a copy of it.

When Campion was brought out to die, and it was seen that all his finger nails had been wrenched off in the torture, it is not surprising that people no longer believed Burghley's elaborate lies. Ten days after the martyrdom the Spanish Ambassador could write:

"Notwithstanding the torture by which they sought to extract from the martyrs, declarations of the persons with whom they were in communication, they were unable to obtain them, and I cannot exaggerate the beneficial effect that this has had, and the confidence that it has inspired in all sorts of people, to reconcile and convert them to the Catholic faith, as before they saw this firmness in refusing to divulge the names of their friends, the English were shy of attaching themselves to the cause."⁵²

Such was the evidence before the public at the close of 1581. Since our national archives have been made accessible very little more has come to light, but what little there is tells in favour of Campion.

There is, for instance, a private letter written by Lord Burghley to Lord Shrewsbury on 6 August 1581, the very day that the Privy Council ordered the arrest of Vaux, Tresham, and Catesby, and the day before Shrewsbury himself was ordered to arrest Henry Sacheverell. After referring to the execution of Everard Hanse on 31 July, Burghley adds, almost casually:

"I think your lordship hath heard how Campion the Jesuit was taken in Berkshire, and three massing priests with him,

at one Yates' house. He denieth to any question of moment, having been convented before my lord Chancellor and my lord of Leicester."⁵³

This is all he has to say of one whose confessions had compromised many of the chief Catholics of England, including a peer of the realm, and were so soon to be a topic of discussion all over the country. Why this reticence? There was no need for secrecy: the Privy Council had blazoned the news four days before.

There is among Burghley's papers, written partly in his own hand, a long document⁵⁴ that seems to be the only official paper connected with these trials that survives. It is undated, but it must be later than 21 August 1581, when Catesby refused to depose. It begins without any heading.

<p>"Campion confesseth his being in these houses</p>	{	<p>The L. Vauxe Sr. Tho. Tresham, knight Sr. William Catesby, knight</p>	}	<p>in summer 1580</p>
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"These being informed of Campion's confession and required on her Majesty's behalf, by her Majesty's commandment to answer unto the L. Treasurer, L. Chamberlain and Earl of Leicester upon their oaths whether to their knowledge Campion had been at any their houses since June, 1580, that Campion came over, refused so to do and the L. Vaux also refused to answer thereunto upon his honour.

[Added in Burghley's hand] "notwithstanding they were severally informed that Campion had confessed the same, where the direct confessions were read to them, and after their refusal to purge themselves by their oaths, they were oftentimes charged in her Majesty's name upon their allegiance, and yet they still peremptorily refused to answer."

"Gervase Pierrepont's brother

"That he was there all the last Christmas, and tarried there until the Tuesday after Twelfth Day [10 Jan.], brought thither by Gervase Pierrepont, confessed by both the Pierreponts. He said Masses and confessed Gervase every week once.

"Henry Sacheverell, esquire

"That he was there about the Wednesday after Twelfth Day

[11 Jan.] tarried there one night, confessed by Mr. Sacheverell, and that he said one Mass.

‘Langford, esquire

“That he was there two nights about Thursday and Friday after Twelfth Day last [12-13 Jan.], confessed, and that there he said two Masses. Gervase Pierrepont confessed it also.

“The Lady Fuljames

“That he was there about Saturday after Twelfth Day last [14 Jan.]. Gervase Pierrepont, that they stayed there two nights, and said two Masses.

“Powdrell, gent.

“Himself confesseth his being there with Gervase Pierrepont, Gilbert, after Christmas last, when Campion said Mass.

“Ayiers of the Stiple

“That he brought Campion thither about the Monday sevensnight after Twelfth Day last [16 Jan.]. When they met with Tempest by former appointment, after which Campion confesseth he went northwards with Tempest and that they kept company together about six days, and will confess no place of their being but at inns.”

This is followed by similar details of houses in Yorkshire,—details that agree exactly with the schedule sent there on 4 August—and four houses in Lancashire. Then comes the following list :

“Price, esq.

William Griffeth, esq.

The Lady Stonor

East, gentleman

The Lady Babington

Mrs Pollard, widow

Yates, gentleman

“That he has been at all these places since Whitsuntide last, at Price’s in his absence, at Mr Griffeth’s wife and [blank] Morris, being there at the Lady Stonor’s, John Stonor’s [blank] Sely his man being there at Mr. Yates’. All these that were taken with him privy to it ; and at Griffeth’s Persons and he met, and were also together at Stonor’s lodge.”

This list shows that Burghley was in possession of detailed information as to Campion's movements from 10 January, 1581, till about Whitsuntide. Outside that period his knowledge was vague and fragmentary. For the first six months of Campion's apostolate the only names given are those of the three Northamptonshire men, and the time is only vaguely known. Of his tour through the south midlands in 1580 not a single definite detail of time or place had come to light. About his return journey from Lancashire Burghley is equally in the dark, until he reaches Lyford where he was captured. If all these facts were confessed by Campion, why should some be so detailed and others so vague? The proclamation against Jesuits, making it a crime to harbour them, was issued on 10 January, 1581. Before that date it was dangerous of course, but not illegal to receive them. If all this data came from Campion, why should he be so reticent as to where he was in 1580, and so forthcoming regarding his movements as soon as the proclamation was published? This document is more intelligible on the supposition that the information contained in it was supplied in the first place by spies, who picked up the trail only when Campion set out for the north. Campion, if he confessed anything on the rack, may have acknowledged the truth of these reports, but he can hardly have added anything that was not already known.

Perhaps this document also helps to answer the second question why only Vaux, Tresham, and Catesby denied that they had received Campion. The other prisoners were faced with precise and accurate accusations; it would have been folly to have denied what was obviously known to the government. But no such specific charges were brought against these three. Tresham, indeed, was prepared to prove that Campion had never been in his house: he asked his judges to "limit the times and places," and they were unable to do so. Tresham must have suspected that Burghley knew less than he pretended, and was fishing for information, with the detailed charges against the other prisoners as his bait. Sir Walter Mildmay assumed that Campion had called at the Northamptonshire houses of these three on his way back from the north, but there is no confirmation of this from any other source. Persons apparently met and reconciled Tresham and Catesby at Hoxton, and he may have met Vaux there or at Hackney. It is only a presumption that any of them met Campion

and there is not a scrap of evidence that Campion ever set foot in Northamptonshire as a priest. Two years later, when Campion was beyond the power of the rack-master, Tresham writes, apropos of this trial:

"I assure you, had I then known what I do know, that I would at that instant have as readily satisfied them, as since sundry times by writing and by word."⁵⁵

It is difficult to imagine what additional information had come his way, except some assurance that he might safely have denied the charge on oath, without any danger of losing his ears.

The article on Vaux in the Dictionary of National Biography does him an injustice in stating that "subsequently Vaux confessed that the accusation of harbouring Campion was justified." He did nothing of the sort. The authority referred to is Strype,⁵⁶ who gives a long document "drawn up by the hand of the lord treasurer, being the sum of what the lord Vaux had verbally confessed, and was now to subscribe, in order for favour to be shewn him." The original draft, in Burghley's hand, dated 6 February 1583, is in the British Museum.⁵⁷ Vaux first desires the Queen's favour and secondly "did humbly confess that I do now know that I did grievously offend, that I did refuse to answer upon my oath, whether Campion since executed was to my knowledge in my house or company, and I confess I do now know upon better instruction, that in that refusal I did grievously offend; and if it were to be done, I would not so offend, nor will hereafter ever offend in any like case; beseeching her majesty to be my gracious lady, and to forgive and pardon me for the same: and to have compassion for me for the great fine set upon me for the said offence." Thirdly he desires to be spared from coming to church, until he may otherwise resolved in his conscience. "Yet I did and do offer willingly to hear any instruction, whereby my conscience may be better informed and satisfied, and will admit any conference with any learned persons to inform me herein, so as it shall appear, not to come to the church upon any contemptuous meaning, but only for offence of conscience."

In fact he is willing to do anything short of apostasy, except to tell us whether or no Campion was in his house.

Campion was brought to trial in Westminster Hall on 20

November. He was not charged with any of the crimes that one might have expected. He was not accused of "persuading," which was now treason, or of stirring up sedition among the inflammable Catholic youth. He was not even arraigned for saying "a detestable Mass, derogatory to the blood of Christ." He was lumped with nineteen others, including one layman, and all were accused of plotting at Rome and Rheims the death of the Queen. Four of them were tried in their absence. Two of these had never set foot in England as priests, the other two had been in England, but were now safe abroad. They were all condemned to death except one. The exception was John Colleton who was able to prove that he had never been in Rome or Rheims, and was in England at the time of the alleged conspiracy. The verdict was a foregone conclusion. The jury did as was expected of them, to their lasting shame. At the foot of William Ayloff, one of the judges, sat a young man, evidently his amanuensis. Ayloff bent down and asked in a whisper whether he had anything bloody about him. On receiving an answer in the negative he said :

"Look, my hands and signet-ring are covered with blood."⁵⁸

The young man was John Roper, whose daughter, Elizabeth, was destined to marry George Vaux.⁵⁹

On Friday 1 December, Edmund Campion, Ralph Sherwin and Alexander Briant were drawn on hurdles to Tyburn. Perhaps Lord Vaux and Sir Thomas Tresham heard in the Fleet the shouts of the rabble as the three priests were dragged through the mire on that wet and dreary winter's morning. There was a huge concourse of people. Some of Campion's devoted young friends pressed so close upon him, that when the executioner cut him down and plunged his knife into his still quivering flesh, the blood spurted over a young man named Henry Walpole who was destined to become a Jesuit too, and to die the same terrible death in the same cause.⁶⁰

And was there, I wonder, among that crowd of eager disciples and old students, one who had loved Campion with the generous love of boyhood, in the quiet of Harrowden Hall? We shall never know. But we do know that before the mangled quarters of Campion had been picked white by the birds, Henry Vaux had decided to leave all things and to become a Jesuit.

CHAPTER II

HACKNEY

I

THE prisoners had been sentenced by the judges in the Star Chamber to be "close prisoners." This meant that they were to be in solitary confinement, unable to receive visitors without a special warrant, and even then only in the presence of the warden, and cut off from all communication with the world outside. But in practice, thanks to universal bribery, they obtained a good deal of unofficial freedom. Thus, on 11 December, a month after their sentence the Spanish Ambassador could write :

"Although Thomas Tresham is a prisoner I am in constant communication with him by means of priests. He and all his family are strong Catholics, and he is extremely prudent and circumspect in all his actions."¹

A few days later we find Lady Vaux in London, doubtless to perform those womanly administrations which would make prison life less intolerable. She lodged with Francis Brown, brother of Viscount Montague, in the parish of St. Saviour's in Southwark. Many members of this family, with their servants and with "The Ladie Mary Vauze" appear in the lists of recusants preserved at Loseley (Surrey).² Only one list bears a date, 30 January, 1582, but it is certain that Lady Vaux was there before Christmas, 1581, and it may reasonably be supposed that she came to London soon after her husband's imprisonment in the previous August.

There was at this time a seminary priest in London named Edward Osborn, whose home was at Kelmarsh (Northants), and who was related both to Vaux and Tresham. He had had a chequered career. Dismissed from the English College in Rome as unstable he had tried his vocation for a short time with the Franciscans, and failing that, Cardinal Allen, with too much kindness, had had him ordained and sent him to England. He

was captured in February, 1582, and confessed his priesthood and his other crimes to the notorious sadist and priest-hunter Richard Topcliffe, whose notes are still extant.

“Edward Osborne, a fugitive seminary priest in prison in the Clink . . . He hath said 6 or 7 Masses since his coming over. One Mass upon twelfth day last [6 Jan.] in the Fleet, before the Lord Vaux, Sir Thomas Tresham, Mr. Tyrwhitt and another gentleman and two of their men. Three or four Masses at my Lady Vaux’s lodging before my Lady there, at Mr. Brown’s house at St. Mary Overy’s, where Henry Tuke her man did help him to say Mass. He hath confessed Mistress Tyrwhitt and divers others. He saith that one Stamp a priest of London, and one Bayard a seminary, resorts to Mr. Brown’s house at St. Mary Overy’s, and use to say Mass there.”³

Henry Tuke was arrested and imprisoned in the Counter in the Poultry till July following.⁴ On 13 March the warden of the Fleet was reprimanded for slackness, and ordered to search the prisoners’ rooms. On the 15th the Solicitor-General, the Recorder of London, Dr. Hamond, and Mr. Topcliffe were required to repair to the Fleet to examine Vaux, Tresham and others touching a Mass said there in Vaux’s chamber.⁵

Thus Vaux and Tresham were brought face to face with Richard Topcliffe, one of the most odious characters in history. About his cruelty, writers contemporary and modern, Catholic and Protestant are in complete agreement. He was now just beginning his infamous career. For the next twenty years (he died in 1604) the annals of the persecution are punctuated with his hideous sadism. He is not without connections with Northamptonshire, for his sister married William Brudenell of Stanion, and he had a long lawsuit with Sir Edmund Brudenell of Deene, who threatened “to entertain him with a case of pistols fixed in his bosom” if he came to Deene.⁶

We have unfortunately no account of the interview in the Fleet between the prisoners and their four examiners. We have only a letter written by Fleetwood, the Recorder of London, to Lord Burghley “this Easter even [15 April] 1582.”

“In Christenmas he [Osborne] said sundry Masses at Mr. Brown’s house, my lord Viscount’s brother, before my Lady

Vaux and certain others, and in *crastino Epiphaniae* [Sunday January 7th] he said Mass in the Fleet in my lord Vaux his chamber, before my lord, Mr. Tresham, Mr. Tirwitt and others. For the which offence these three were upon Wednesday last [April 11th] convicted in the Guildhall in an oyer and determiner, where the said Osborne did give lively evidence. Although they before judgment did stoutly deny the same, yet after they did most humbly submit themselves unto her majesty, and so departed to prison again. This Osborne is nephew to Sir Robert Lane and near akin to my Lord Vaux and to Mr. Tresham.”⁷ They were fined 100 marks each.⁸

When William Allen published in 1584 his *True Sincere and Modest Defence of English Catholics*, he refers to this incident as follows :

“For what other cause did you threaten the torture to Mr. Osborne, but to make him confess that he had said Mass before the true noble confessors of Christ, my Lord Vaux and Sir Thomas Tresham. And, which is more intolerable, is not your rack used or threatened to force men by the fear thereof to speak things against truth by your appointment, and specially for false accusation of innocent gentlemen ? ”⁹

This appeared in Latin four years later in Bridgewater’s *Concertatio*,¹⁰ and soon the sufferings of Vaux and Tresham were known all over Catholic Europe. It is only fair to add that in his recantation made in 1587, Osborne does not mention the threat of torture, but blames the eloquence of Richard Lewis, Rector of Kelmarsh.¹¹

All this time Tresham was writing indignant letters to the Council and to individual members professing their loyalty to the queen in temporal matters, and reiterating their refusal to take an oath that concerned matters of conscience. But while they were expressing their civil loyalty in no ambiguous terms they made it clear by their conduct that they had no intention of respecting the new penal laws whose object was the extirpation of their religion. Although at the mercy of the government and close prisoners, they still resisted the tyranny.

Lord Cobham, the English Ambassador at Paris, writes to Walsingham on 30 January, 1582 :

"It is given me to understand, Sir, how that Nicholson, servant to the Lord Vaux is come over, passing at Dover, with a great packet of letters, being gone hence to Rheims, from whence as they say he goeth to Rome, with informations of the Lord Vaux's troubles and estate, together with new instructions of Campion's acts and other his confederates."¹²

There could surely be no plainer evidence of Vaux's continuing friendship, than that he who was in prison on Campion's account should court the further anger of the authorities by smuggling out of the country the true facts of the martyr's death; facts that might otherwise have never been preserved.

The following letter from Burghley shows that the prisoners were already resorting to a subterfuge that was to be used more and more as persecution developed and the Catholics settled down to resist. In order to evade the fines and penalties they conveyed their property to friends and relatives who were not convicted papists. The letter, dated 30 March, 1582, is addressed to John Isham the Sheriff of Northamptonshire.

"I have received your letter by your servant this bearer which I have imparted to Mr. Chancellor being with me by occasion the same day. Whereby I understand that you cannot levy such sums of money as by writ you were directed, for fines imposed upon my Lord Vaux and Sir Thomas Tresham for recusancy and other causes, by reason of estates and conveyances made by the Lord Vaux of his lands and goods to his son, and by Sir Thomas Tresham to one Vavisor, a man of his toward the law, and another named Lawe. For the which your advertisement I do heartily thank you, praying you to make inquiries what lands or goods they are that his Lordship hath conveyed to the young gentleman his son, with their names and values as you can obtain the understanding thereof, and the like also of Sir Thomas Tresham's lands and goods. And herewith I desire you to be informed of the qualities, degrees and conditions of this said Vavisor and Lawe, as well for their reputation in the country for wealth and other account that is had of them, as also for their religion and resorting to the church, which I pray you do so as soon as you conveniently may. Whereupon you shall

receive further direction touching the execution of such process as you have received."¹³

By September, Isham had managed to draw up an inventory of Tresham's lands, valued at £655 16s., half of which was seized for the use of the Queen.¹⁴

In spite of the law that required a licence for anyone to travel abroad, and in spite of the new laws forbidding papists to send their children to be educated beyond the seas, there was a good deal of traffic to and fro at this time. Fr. Persons had retired to the Continent with William Tresham before the martyrdom of Fr. Campion, and now in March, 1582, he sent his servant, Robert Alfield, on a strange mission. It was to smuggle two young ladies to the Continent. One was Mary Dymmock, who had been one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting, and the other was Lord Vaux's second daughter Elizabeth. They both became Poor Clares at Rouen. Though Alfield carried out this task well, as Fr. Persons admits, still his conduct was giving rise to suspicion, and as he could have done untold harm in England, where he knew all the Jesuit resorts, Fr. Persons sent him to Rome and arranged to have him put in prison there.¹⁵

On 18 April Vaux's two younger sons by his second marriage, Edward and Ambrose, suddenly turn up at the English College at Rheims on a visit lasting twelve days.¹⁶ As they were only young boys of thirteen and eleven, it is probable that they had been sent over to school. On 17 October Lord Cobham writes from Paris to inform Walsingham that :

"My Lord Vaux's son is come hither, accompanied by Apolidor Morgan. The English papists say that one of Lord Vaux's sons will become a religious man, and receive the orders of their priests. It is thought the coming over of Englishmen should be now as good a trade as in other times the passing over of geldings : or else it is not to be imagined they would resort hither so easily, and in such great number."¹⁷

This new arrival was George Vaux, the eldest son by the second marriage. He was now eighteen. On 2 November he is recorded as paying a visit to the College at Rheims together with Polidor Morgan, a priest, and two youths, who were to study for the priesthood.¹⁸ Thus while Lord Vaux languished

in prison, four of his children made their way to the Continent, in spite of the law and the strict watch that was kept at all the ports.

It is strange that Lord Vaux was never, as far as we know, called to account for sending his family beyond the seas. Of course he could have pleaded his close imprisonment, and it was probably his eldest son, Henry, who was responsible. Nor was Tresham in trouble for his brother's sudden departure with Father Persons. But he was very upset. William Tresham had been a Queen's Pensioner, and had quitted her service without permission. He wrote from Paris on 15 January to his mother, giving as his reason for departure some "heavy displeasure" that the Earl of Leicester had conceived against him.¹⁹ He also wrote an offensive letter to Sir Christopher Hatton, who had befriended him at court, and who seems to have been genuinely wounded by this lack of gratitude. William accuses Hatton of calling him a "papist galliard" and retaliates by calling Hatton a "grasshopper that flourisheth in the summer's heat and yet is killed with the first bartlemew dew."²⁰ But they were later reconciled, for he wrote to Sir Christopher asking him to use his influence on behalf of "my poor brother, detained now in prison for the remorse and liberty of conscience."²¹ He also wrote to the Queen a letter that must have infuriated her. Hatton's secretary, Mr. Cox, thus reported it to Sir Thomas :

"He hath written in his letter to her Majesty sundry things that hath highly increased her Majesty's displeasure, among other, that he hath absented himself in respect of the great displeasure which the Lord of Leicester beareth him, which her Highness doth not allow for a sufficient excuse to depart so undutifully from her Majesty's service ; secondly that he promiseth to return, which more moveth her Highness than his departure did ; . . . thirdly, that audaciously he notifieth to her Majesty that he will go to Rouen (a town in France as I remember the name) which is a place that her Highness doth greatly dislike of, and that it is to be feared that he cannot long continue there a good subject."²²

William might have added that he was travelling with Fr. Persons, and plotting an invasion of Scotland by Spanish troops.² He wisely remained abroad. Persons procured him a captaincy

in the Spanish forces, and a pension that was always in arrears. They seem to have fallen out afterwards. His name occurs frequently in the newsletters from Flanders, often referring to his fruitless endeavours to squeeze something out of the King of Spain.

One letter describes him as "not overcloyed with wit and judgment."³⁰ He returned to England a month after the death of Elizabeth "much changed in his speech, for his tongue is as lisping in the French tongue," and refusing to let his servants stand with their hats off, as was customary in England.²³

By the end of 1582 all the prisoners except Vaux and Tresham had been released, but under what conditions we do not know.²⁴ These two were still in the Fleet on 22 March, 1583,²⁵ but were released before 19 April, after twenty months of close confinement.²⁶

II

It must not be supposed that, on their release from the Fleet, the two prisoners were free. Tresham was confined to a house in Hoxton, which he calls a "cottage, erst a tippling ale-house" and "far unable to contain half my family."²⁷ Lady Tresham's description of this house (written for her by her husband) is more amusing to us than it was to them.

"He is now under a wayward warden, very badly entertained, in worse wise divided from wife and children, and too, too badly lodged, as with extremity of daily smoke bitterly annoyed, and with continual heat ready in this hot, wet season to be sweltered, his chamber being allotted over a noisome kitchen, rudely and disjoinedly boarded and not a whit ceiled, that my husband were as good to lie in the kitchen as over the kitchen, in respect of noise, smoke, heat, loathsome savours, and that which is worst, in oft hearing ungodly, lascivious and blasphemous speeches : and withal so scanted of room and bedding is this vile chamber, thus pestered with enormities, that when I remain there myself, I always am forced to send my daughter into the town to lodge, where I may provide her a bed."

By refinement of cruelty he was in the very next house to his own where he could have enjoyed "a little orchard and less

garden thereto adjoining.”²⁸ He had entered into a bond of £2,000 not to go out of the house, “and further that Mr. Tresham should be bound to his good behaviour without exception of cases of religion or conscience whatsoever, which till now were ever granted to be exempted.”²⁹

Lady Tresham wrote to her influential friends, begging their good offices “that Mr. Tresham might be his own prisoner in his house at Hoxton, putting in bond of £2,000 not to depart thence, which albeit is but changing from one prison to another, yet would it be greatly beneficial to Mr. Tresham for his health, and to me and our children exceeding comfort to enjoy him, whom so long time (two full years) we have wanted.”³⁰

It would be interesting to know how long Tresham was forced to live in this rented “cottage” for it was evidently during those months that an incident happened which we will give in the words of an eye-witness, a priest named Davis. He is speaking of another priest, named Nicholas Woodfen, *alias* Devereux.

“Coming to London after his return, he was driven to great necessity ; and learning that I was entertained by Sir Thomas Tresham’s lady, who lived in Tuttle Street in Westminster (Sir Thomas Tresham, her husband, being prisoner at Hoxton, beyond London), he came to an inn thereby and sent me a letter. I came unto him, who declared unto me, the tears standing in his eyes, that he had neither money to buy him any meat, nor scarce any clothes upon his back. I pitied his case, comforted him, and gave him such money as I had then present, and afterwards acquainted him with Catholics in London ; and by the help of Mr. Francis Brown, the old Lord Montague’s brother, I got him apparel, and furnished him in such sort as he took a chamber in Fleet Street . . . where he went by the name of Woodfen. But Norris the pursuivant ferreted him out, and forced him from thence. After that he came to Hoxton to me, the next day after his coming, he fell into the like danger ; for the house was beset and seached by two pursuivants, who, to be the more sure of their prey, brought with them the owner or landlord of the house : who, finding a certain door closed up, told Sir Thomas of it, who said it was true, that because his serving men lay in that chamber and his son in the next chamber, to the end

that his men should not have access to his son, he barred up that door; wherein, indeed, the secret place was devised, which saved us both at that time."³¹

Fr. Davis survived to tell the tale, but Nicholas Woodfen was later captured and martyred at Tyburn in 1586.

On 1 October, Tresham, still in the hired house, wrote to Sir Walter Mildmay, begging that he might have licence to go instead to his own house in Tuthill St., Westminster, where his winter provisions had already been laid in. This was not granted, but he was eventually allowed to go to his own house in Hoxton, and to move about within the parishes of Hoxton and Shoredich.³²

Lord Vaux meanwhile was moved to a house in what is now north London. It is sometimes called Islington, sometimes Tottenham, but more often Hackney. He tells us that he rented it from Lord Mordaunt and had no other house near London.³³

The move to Hackney was before 1 October, 1583, when begins that long series of indictments "for not going to church, chapel, or any other usual place of Common Prayer," with the huge penalty of £20 per lunar month. The earliest is for the last quarter of 1583 and besides Lord Vaux, mentions George Vaux, his son, and William Hollis, all of Hackney. The next which extends from December, 1583, till March, 1584, includes Henry Vaux, William Worseley yeoman, Jocosa Barlow widow, all of Tottenham. Then they continue fairly regularly till January, 1587. From June till October, 1585, are included William Vachell, John Parker, William Cheyney and Valentine Kellison, yeomen, servants of Lord Vaux, and Andrew Mallory gentleman, Elizabeth his wife, all of Hackney, and three servants.³⁴ There is a gap from October, 1585, to October, 1586, but the last four months of this period is covered, for some reason, by an indictment at Westminster, which includes recusants from many parts of what is now east and north London, as well as from the city of London proper.³⁵

It is evident that Lord Vaux was living with most of his family at Hackney. There is mention, in one document or another, of practically every member, though it is not always clear which of the daughters is referred to. They were doubtless closely watched. Pursuivants were constantly raiding the houses of

suspected papists, carrying off their private papers, and reporting on their movements and their visitors. Tresham had been out of the Fleet not much over a year when, on 27 August, 1584, Mr. Justice Smith, Francis Mills and George the High Constable, swooped down once more without warning on his house at Hoxton. Here is their report.

“SIR THOMAS TRESHAM’S HOUSE

In it of persons we found besides Sir Thomas Tresham himself, the Lady Tresham his wife, Mrs. Frances, Mrs. Catherine and Mrs. Elizabeth his daughters; Mr. Lewis Tresham their son; Mrs. Mary Courtney, my ladies’ woman; Lucy and Dorothy, the two chamber-maids, Isabella and Elizabeth, the kitchen-maids; Peter Watfield who served him three years; Maurice Hilton his man, having served him seven years; Richard Allen, who served him seven years, Edward Kinsman, who hath served him four years; Henry Gilbert, the butler; Denis Parrett, who served him not above a month; Mrs. Merrill Vaux, daughter to the Lord Vaux, and Mrs. Catherine Dymock.

“Moreover we found and brought away from the same house the things following: A popish painted crucifix on a table [tablet] hanging by the same lady’s bedside; the Jesuit’s Testament in English, *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis* [part] ij; A Manual of Prayers dedicated to the gentlemen of the Inns of Court; Vaux’s Catechism; the first book of the Christian Exercises; a book of prayer and meditation; a painted crucifix upon orange-coloured satin; a picture of Christ upon canvas.

“Of the persons above named only three would acknowledge to be able to write and read, and to be no further learned, viz: Richard Allen, Edward Kinsman, and Denis Parrett.

“Also we found there, which we left behind, a new fashioned picture of Christ in a great table, and a tabernacle of sundry painted images, with leaves to fold, serving as should seem for a tabernacle or screen to stand upon an altar.”

After describing equally satisfactory finds at the houses of Mr. Thomas Wilford and Mr. Ralph Tipping the report concludes:

“In all the three foresaid houses commandment was by us

given (according to our directions) to the said houses upon their allegiance to see all the foresaid persons forthcoming until they should be discharged of them."³⁶

Among Tresham's papers is "A note of books by Mr. Justice Young carried from Hoxton." It is undated, but as some of the titles occur in the above report, it may refer to this search, though the name of the Justice is different. The list is interesting as showing what sort of books Tresham was reading.

"*A christian Directorie* in 8⁰

A booke of prayer and meditation 8⁰

A garland of our blessed Virgen, written 8⁰

A devout treatise etc. in English 4⁰

Vauxes Cathechisme 12⁰

A little Prymer

Granatensis in Italian, five volumes 16⁰

Gioiello Christiano, Italice 12⁰

Giardino spirituale etc Ital

Le Liure de vraie et parfaicte oraison, gallice 12⁰

La minera dol mondo etc. Ital. Also *La grandezza et distanza id tutti le Sferre*, bounde intogether

Consciones Granatensis Latin ye tres tom 8⁰

Hymni et Collecte Latine 16⁰

De veritate Corporis Xti in Euchar., etc. Cuthberti Tunstall 4⁰

The historie of the Churche of England by Beede In English 4⁰

A prymer English and Latin 4⁰

ffoure Latine Prymers

Tranquilitatis animi preservatio et monumentum ad sereniss: d.

Mariam Scot: Reginam etc. written 4⁰

Pie afflicti animi meditationes divinaque remedia ad principem

Mariam Scot: Reg: written 8⁰

Caelius Cyprianus Martir his book of the habite of virgins etc.

anglice written 8⁰

Ye Greeke Testament"³⁷

Vaux's Catachism has nothing to do with Lord Vaux. It was the work of Lawrence Vaux, a priest who died in prison only

a few months after this search. *The Christian Directory* was Father Persons' famous work, published in 1581. Richard Hopkin's *Book of Prayer and Meditation* was published in 1582. Bede's History is evidently the translation of Thomas Stapleton, published at Antwerp in 1556. Tresham's current reading is in five languages. In addition he had books at Rushton in what he calls "Douche."³⁸

The persecution was now beginning to increase in violence. Walsingham's spies were pouring in reports of the movements of priests, but it was, alas, from renegade students from the colleges abroad and their own brother priests turned traitors, that the government derived the most authentic information against the Jesuits and seminary priests.

In August, 1584, we get the first report of Henry Vaux's activities, though only a passing glimpse. James Hill, a west-country gentleman who had met many priests in France, writes to Sir Francis Walsingham :

"Since upon my coming and return to London, lodging at the sign of the White Hart in Holborn, I there grew acquainted with one Hugh Yates, sometimes servant to the Lord Vaux his son. This hath had one Alfield repairing to him, with whom I was acquainted, who had his stuff for the purpose [of saying Mass ?] commonly carried with him in a box."³⁹ This Alfield is not Fr. Persons' servant, who was now safely locked up in Rome, but his brother, Thomas Alfield, a priest, who was martyred at Tyburn on 6 July, 1585.

The next false Catholic was Ralph Miller, or Meller as he is called in the Douai diary,⁴⁰ who was captured and on 9 October, 1584, made a very long confession, of which the following is all that concerns us here :

"This examinant did afterwards meet one Robert Brown, who hath an uncle a priest with the Lord Vaux, who is a little man with white head, and a little brown hair on his face, goeth in an ash-colour coat and a gown faced with cony, and he was made priest long since at Cambrai as this examinant thinketh.

"This examinant spoke with the Lord Vaux and with his lady at Hackney, after that his son, Mr. George, and the said Robert Brown had told him that this examinant was a tailor

of Rheims. And on Sunday was fortnight this examinant did hear Mass there, whereat were present about 18 persons, being my lord's household, and the priest last before named said the Mass. The said priest lieth in a chamber beyond the hall, on the left hand the stair that leadeth to the chambers, and the Mass is said in the chapel, being right over the port [porch] entering into the hall; and the way into it is up the stair aforesaid, on the left hand, at the further end of the gallery: and there is a very fair crucifix of silver . . . There is a young man named William Harrington, came from Rheims about a month past, who lieth at a tailor's house next to the White Horse in Holborn, on this side Fetter Lane, where two of his brethren lie also. The said Harrington was at the Mass at the Lord Vaux' aforesaid with this examinee, and is very desirous to be a Jesuit, and would fain send over his elder brother. The said Harrington knoweth of priests lying about Kentish Town . . . Meredith the priest was at the Lord Vaux his house within the month. The Lord Vaux demanded of this examinee the cause of his coming into England and told him: you see how the world goeth; we are poor prisoners. And the priest said that they looked any day for search to be made for them."⁴¹

William Harrington was a boy of seventeen. His father had got into trouble for harbouring Campion, and William himself was destined to become a priest and a martyr, being executed at Tyburn on 18 February, 1594, aged twenty-seven. Jonas Meredith, scholar of St. John's, Oxford, had been refused permission to proceed M.A. because suspect in religion, and had been expelled in 1574 for publicly protesting against some injustice done to a companion there. Ordained abroad he had returned to England in 1576 and was imprisoned in the Gatehouse in 1577. He was destined to spend many years in various prisons till his banishment in 1603.⁴²

Miller was not the only betrayer. Thomas Dodwell put his remarkable knowledge of the seminary at the disposal of the government. In this same year he gave information that

"My Lord Vaux his son keepeth in manner of a serving man one Bridge *alias* Gratley, a seminary priest."⁴³ And alas for Henry Vaux, his trusted priest was soon to become a

notorious apostate, and to enter Walsingham's service as a most efficient spy.

III

On 19 December, 1584, the day parliament rose for the Christmas recess, a bill was introduced that was to have the most tragic consequences for Catholics.⁴⁴ It proposed to make the very fact of being a priest, ordained beyond the seas since the first year of the Queen's reign, an act of treason. The loyal circle, of which Tresham was by now the mouthpiece and Vaux the leader, in their sorrow and consternation debated the advisability of presenting a petition to the Queen. They were still under the impression that she was swayed by a ruthless and unscrupulous council, and thought that some relief might be accorded them if only they could appeal direct "to the merciful protection of your sacred sceptre." After some misgivings it was decided to present a long petition signed by a few prominent Catholics who had suffered more than most. The list was headed by Lord Vaux, Sir John Arundell, and Sir Thomas Tresham. It is a noble and dignified document, composed for the most part by Tresham, and shows us this loyal Englishman and unswerving Catholic at his best.

After fervent protestations of loyalty to the Queen it recounts the extremities to which the Catholics have already been reduced. Their refusal to go to the Protestant churches is a matter of conscience. They promise to attend Protestant worship if the learned Protestant divines can prove to the learned of the Catholic Church that it may be done without grave sin. Then it turns to the proposed new laws :

"If now, most gracious Lady, those priests who have not at any time been detected, accused or charged with any act or device of treason, should offer to continue and live within your realm, and (for so doing) shall be adjudged traitors, be it for their coming hither or continuance here, or for the practising and ministering of the Blessed Sacrament only, then consequently we your faithful loving subjects are like to be capitally touched with the same treason. And we know by no possible means how to clear and keep ourselves free from it, for when the prophets and anointed priests of God, moved

by zeal to save souls, do repair hither to distribute spiritual comforts according to every man's need, and coming to our gates do crave natural sustenance for their hungry and persecuted bodies, proffering us also ghostly food, and medicine for our unclean souls, what shall we now do? We do verily believe them to be priests of God's church. We do certainly know that they daily pray for your Majesty; their predecessors in that calling have ministered Baptism and Confirmation unto your Majesty by their ministry. Your Majesty is anointed Queen, and ordinarily and rightfully placed in your regal seat as all your ancestors have been. Oh poor worms, what shall now become of us? What desolation are we brought unto? O God and heavens, earth and men witness with us and plead our cause. O most lamentable condition. If we receive them (by whom we know no evil at all) it shall be deemed treason in us. If we shut our doors and deny our temporal relief to our Catholic pastors in respect of their function, then are we already judged most damnable traitors to Almighty God and his holy members, and are most guilty of that curse threatened to light upon such as refuse to comfort and harbour the apostles and disciples of Christ, saying: *And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words: Truly it shall be easier for them in the land of Sodom and Gommorrha in the day of judgment.* Against which irreprovable sentence we may in no wise wrestle.

"Behold, O gracious and most liege Sovereign, into what straits we are plunged. Be favourable we beseech your Highness unto the lives and souls of men. It is the force of your royal word, and the protection of your large prerogative, that can only disperse these storms, and direct us to the calm and safe haven of indemnity of conscience. . . .

"Suffer us not to be the only outcasts and refuse of the world. Let not us your Catholic native English and obedient subjects stand in more peril for frequenting the Blessed Sacrament and exercising the Catholic religion (and that most secretly) than do the Catholic subjects to the Turk publicly; than do the perverse and blasphemous Jews, haunting their synagogues under sundry Christian kings openly; and than do the Protestants enjoying their public assemblies under divers Catholic kings and princes quietly. Let it not be treason for the sick man in body (even at the last gasp) to

seek ghostly counsel for the salvation of his soul of a Catholic priest . . .

[We make humble petition] "not to suffer any law to be made, whereby all Catholic priests of this realm shall be banished and their receivers made traitors. Grant, O merciful Queen, that we may do the work of mercy to God's priests, so long as they pray for your Majesty and use themselves dutifully to your Highness. We are the more encouraged thus boldly to entreat with your Majesty because in former years it hath been delivered in pulpits and published by books of late printed and otherwise divulged, that your clemency neither hath nor will punish any of your Catholic subjects (for their conscience in matters of religion) with death.

"For our own parts . . . your Majesty shall find us such subjects as God requireth and your Majesty desireth, that is, most obedient first to God, and next, to your Highness most loving, most loyal, and most dutiful. Our Lord God preserve your Majesty to our inestimable joy and your endless felicity. Amen."⁴⁵

Parliament reassembled on 4 February, 1585, and that very day the new bill was given its first reading in the Lords. It was read a third time on 3 March, and sent to the Commons. The Commons discussed it on 8 March, and made some amendments and returned it to the Lords on the 11th.⁴⁶ It was about this time that the Catholics presented their petition. Richard Shelley, gentleman, who had only recently been set at liberty after four years' imprisonment, undertook to by-pass the "normal channels" and place it directly in the hands of the Queen. There is a contemporary copy of the petition in the archives of Westminster Cathedral, with a note appended that tells us the sequel :

"A true copy of the Supplication delivered to the hands of her Majesty in the 27th year of her reign, from the Catholic recusants by Mr. Shelley, at such time as she walked in her park at Greenwich, and at the time of the parliament then holden, by which parliament all men made priests since midsummer anno 1^o of her reign were made traitors and the receivers of them felons. The said Mr. Shelley, for his presuming to deliver it to her Majesty, not acquainting the right honourable of the Privy Council first withal, and for no

other cause as he often protested, was by Sir Francis Walsingham then Chief Secretary, committed close prisoner to the Marshalsea where he died, which was the sum of the answer made unto it."⁴⁷

Shelley was arrested, and on 12 March was examined.

"1. Being asked who was the author of a late book exhibited by him unto her Majesty, saith that there was not one only author thereof, but that it passed divers hands, as the Lord Vaux, Sir John Arundel, Sir Thomas Tresham, Sir W. Catesby, Mr. W. Tyrwitt's, Mr. Price, Mr. Francis Brown, Mr. Fitton, Mr. William Wilford and divers others whom he knoweth not.

"2. Being asked who made him acquainted first with the said book he saith the Lord Vaux and Sir Thomas Tresham who, together with the rest above named, delivered the said examinee, by their letter, but without fortuning an especial author, to present the said book unto her Majesty.

"3. Being asked how long he was made acquainted with this book he saith since the beginning of March, and that Mr. Francis Brown and Mr. Fitton first made him acquainted withal, as also Mr. Wilford.

"4. Being asked of whom he received the book after it was written, he saith a man of Mr. Fitton's delivered the book unto him."⁴⁸

On 15 March he was committed to the Marshalsea,⁴⁹ and on 9 April again examined, this time by Sir Thomas Bromley, Lord Chancellor, Burghley, the Earl of Leicester, Christopher Hatton and others. The examination turned on the deposing power of the Pope, and all Shelley could say was that "it is very hard for him to discuss what authority the Pope hath, and therefore can answer no further." They asked for the names of the priests who acknowledged the Queen as their lawful prince, and also of those who came craving sustenance at their doors, but Shelley gave no answer and was sent back to the Marshalsea.⁵⁰ He was still there on the last day of October, when he is described as "a very poor man, altogether unable to pay."⁵¹ It seems he did not survive the winter, for he is missing from the list of April, 1586.⁵²

There is no record of the bill being read in the Commons, but it apparently received the Royal Assent on 29 March, when

parliament was prorogued till 20 May.⁵³ It was certainly in force before parliament reassembled. This "Act against Jesuits, seminary priests and other such disobedient persons" (27 Eliz. c.2) made it high treason for a priest, ordained since 26 June, 1559, to be within the Queen's dominions. No proof of treasonable intent was required. Those who relieved such a priest were guilty of felony, and the penalty was death by hanging. The priests were given forty days from the end of the session (i.e. until 8 May) to leave the country.

Thus the Supplication fell on deaf ears. The law whose passage they tried so hard to prevent was responsible for the deaths of over one hundred and fifty innocent victims.

IV

The new laws obviously made it necessary for the priests to dissemble their priesthood and for the laity to deny any knowledge of them when questioned. Nobody is bound to convict himself, especially on a capital charge, and from now on the priests made ever greater use of a new defensive weapon, equivocation. Protestant divines looked down their noses at this strange new economy of the truth. It would have made their task of exterminating the Catholics so much easier, if only the priests had acknowledged their priesthood and gone quietly to the gallows. It was also necessary for the underground movement to go further underground, now that the penalty for helping priests was death. Indeed we hear very little of it during these years of terror, but it must have been functioning efficiently, for the seminary priests were landing and finding shelter in ever increasing numbers.

George Gilbert the young leader of the movement had left England in May, 1581, to become a priest, but died of fever in Italy in 1583. Who succeeded him in his perilous task is not very clear, but at all events, by 1585 the leader was undoubtedly Henry Vaux. Henry was most unfortunate to have among his immediate associates two priests who became notorious apostates and government informers. One was named Grateley and distinguished himself as a spy in the Babington plot; the other was Anthony Tyrrell, who apostatised and recanted several times and was more dangerous as a friend than as an enemy.

Between them they supplied Walsingham with exact information as to Henry Vaux's criminal proceedings. Grateley does not appear openly as a spy till 1586, but there were others who were watching Henry Vaux.

On 2 May, 1585, a spy who signs himself "A.B." reported :

"May it please your honour to be advertised that it is concluded and agreed among the Papists that such priests as are determined to remain in England, or hereafter shall come into England, shall be relieved at the hands of Mr. Henry Vaux, son to the Lord Vaux, or by his assigns. This Henry Vaux, in company of Edmonds the Jesuit [Fr. Weston], Floyd, Jatter, Cornellys, Stampe *alias* Dyghton, and Holland, priests, did lately assemble themselves at the house of Mr. Wylford in Hoxton, where it was ordered the lord Vaux should pay, to the relief of priests that would tarry, one hundred marks. Sir Thomas Tresham, Sir William Catesby and Mr. Wylford one hundred marks the piece, and certain other gentlemen they [as]sessed at lower sums. All this money is presently to be delivered to Mr. Vaux before the forty days [allowed by the new laws for priests to depart the realm], to avoid the danger of the statute, and letters also directed into the country abroad for the said collection, and the money to be delivered to Mr. Vaux, and he to take notice of all priests that shall remain or come into England, and in secret by his servant Harris (as is thought) to relieve them where they shall be heard of."⁵⁴

Before the end of this same month, George Vaux was also attracting attention. On 24 May he entered into recognisances before William Fleetwood, Recorder of London, in the sum of forty pounds, to appear at the next general session of the Peace, and he had to find two sureties of twenty pounds each. One was Henry Marshe, leather-seller of London, the other was Anthony Babington the conspirator.⁵⁵ It does not appear what George's crime was.

This is the first mention of any connection between Babington and the Vaux family, but it is clear that he was on terms of friendship with several members. Only two days after the above recognizances, he called on Lord Vaux at Hackney. He was accompanied by a young man named Alexander Prescott, an apprentice with one James Pennerton, a goldsmith of London.

who sent Prescott with a basin and ewer, silver and gilt, a gift from Babington to Lady Vaux, and no doubt intended to expedite his business with her husband: for Babington wanted to buy certain lands in Nottinghamshire from Lord Vaux. While Vaux and Babington are spending three hours over their bargain, let us accompany Prescott, and hear what two Lancashire men talked about before the days of Old Trafford.

“Whilst the L. Vaux and Mr. Babington were in talk together about the said bargain, one Oseley, servant to the said L. Vaux, requested one Richard, servant to the said Babington, and a gentleman that accompanied Mr. Babington thither (whose name this examine thinketh to be Smith) and this examine, to go all with him into his chamber, and there repose themselves for a while, which they all did. And being there all together the said Oseley took an old printed book, and of purpose layed it open in the window, which this examine took and read. Wherein he remembreth was contained that people ought twice in the year to be shriven, to fast truly in the Lent, and divers printed pictures of the Virgin Mary, of saints and other superstitious toys, which book this examine misliking threw aside.

“Afterwards one of the two others called the said Oseley by the name of Worsley, to whom Oseley answered: ‘I defy the name of the Worsleys.’ This examine answering that in Lancashire were some of good worship of that name.

“‘Yea’ said Oseley, ‘there is one of that name in that county a very bad man, and I defy him. He keepeth a fleet there (meaning a prison), and dealeth very hardly with the people. But if I were as Mr. Tirrell is I would teach him how to keep a fleet as long as he lived.’”

He is referring to Robert Worsley who kept the prison at Salford.

“Afterwards the said Oseley, this Examine and the rest fell in speech of Lancashire, this examine’s native country, and of the love the people there bear to the earl of Derby, and of his late embassy into France.

“‘Tush, tush’ said Oseley, ‘he is not so well-beloved as he hath been heretofore.’

“ ‘Yes,’ said this examinee, ‘he is as well-beloved in his country as any nobleman in England and able to bring as many people with him for the service of his prince and country as any other.’ ”

“ ‘No, no,’ said Oseley, ‘if the earl of Northumberland were at liberty, he is so well-beloved and of such power and strength as he is able to raise up so many men as could pull the earls of Derby, Leicester and Bedford out of their houses by their ears.’ ”

“ ‘Why?’ said this examinee. ‘Do you not think that if it were lawful for every man to do what he lust, that the people of England would not rather take part with any one of the earls of Derby, Leicester or Bedford than with Northumberland?’ ”

“ ‘No, no,’ said Oseley, ‘You are greatly deceived. I will name unto you a gentleman but of mean calling, one Mr. John Talbot, lying but four miles from London; that if the Queen would let him alone, and say: “Talbot, go thy way, and do what thou canst,” he is so well-beloved, and so many would take his part, as he were able to root out all those three earls.’ ”

It is hardly necessary to add, since the regime was totalitarian, that this seditious language was duly reported by Prescott, and next day Walter Wolseley, who “defied” his own name, had to write an endless and laborious explanation that “there was meant no evil at all.”⁵⁶

On 25 July, 1586, Edward Vaux, the second son of Lord Vaux by his second marriage died at Hackney, aged about sixteen, and on 29 August Ambrose, his younger brother, paid another visit to the College at Rheims.⁵⁷ On 19 September, the Spanish Ambassador sent to his King a despatch that makes strange reading today:

“The persecution and terror in England is so great that the majority of the Catholics are endeavouring to get exiled to Germany, and they offer full security that they will not enter into any plots against the Queen, or give her any reason for complaint. The principal people who are making this request are Master Thomas Tresham, Master William Catesby and Master Tichborne.”⁵⁸

But nothing came of it, and in October the recusants, in addition to their crippling fines were ordered to contribute to the Queen's Army, whose principal task was to suppress the Catholic religion. Sir Thomas Tresham and some others managed to pay but

"The Lord Vaux being unable to furnish this service desireth that the extent of his lands may be reviewed for payment of the money, the former extent ending this Michaelmas term."⁵⁹

V

In the winter of 1585-6 Lord Vaux's house at Hackney received more publicity than was wise. In spite of the grave risk, some of the priests were behaving in a way that could not but call attention to them, and soon their strange goings-on were reported to Lord Burghley. They were casting out devils, in true Elizabethan fashion. For the moment we forget the grim reality of the prison and are transported into the world of Puck and Pease-Blossom, Cobweb and Mustard-seed; we are with Poor Tom on the storm-swept heath of *King Lear*. Not that there was anything exclusively popish about it. The famous Doctor John Dee was every whit as familiar with evil spirits, was held in high esteem by his contemporaries, and was even consulted by the Queen.

The principal centre of their activities was the house of Sir Edmund Peckham at Denham (Bucks.). His wife was a sister of Fr. John Gerard S.J., of whom more anon, and they were both notable papists. Their chaplain was one Richard Dibdale, who later died nobly for his faith at Tyburn in October, 1586. Others were Fr. Weston *alias* Edmunds and Fr. Dighton *alias* Stamp, whom we have already met in close connection with Henry Vaux. The patients at Denham included two maid-servants who were judged to be possessed by the devil. The treatment was not Freudian. The patient was tied in a chair and given a nauseous "holy potion," and the resulting sickness was adjudged a sure sign that the devil was loosing his hold. If however the patient failed to be sick, this was a sign of diabolical obstinacy, and more drastic remedies were tried, such as holding burning brimstone under the nose.

Fr. Weston has himself described these exorcisms, and with some enthusiasm. He recounts how a young Catholic gentleman who had witnessed them, was cross-examined by Lord Burghley. His experiences

“amounted to something so marvellous that it could hardly be described. Cecil laughed at everything as being probably a fraud and a series of impositions devised by priests to deceive. Then the young man swore a solemn oath to the truth of his assertions. ‘Apart from other awful things,’ he said, ‘you could see the devils gliding about and moving under the skin in immense numbers, in visible form, like fishes swimming.’”⁶⁰ But even this did not convince Burghley.

Seventeen years later Samuel Harsnet, who ended his career as Archbishop of York, collected sworn statements from some of the energumens, and incorporated them in a little book⁶¹ that is a masterpiece of invective.

But here we are concerned only with the exorcisms at Hackney.

“At the L. Vaux his house at Hackney, was the prime grand miracle performed by the grand master of the craft, Fr. Weston, upon one Marwood, servant to Babington the traitor : where a wonderful thing fell out. Fr. Weston, at the very first encounter with the devil, stunted the devil’s wits, and the devil being once put out could never hit it again, but untrusses and cries out. *O me stultum, infamen et infelicem. O foolish, mad, and miserable devil that I am :* which put all the whole company of spectators into such astonishment as there was a confused shout made of weeping and joy, for this foil of the devil. And the Epilogue was this. *O Catholicam fidem. O insensatos hereticos :* *O the Catholic faith, O senseless heretics,* that could never learn the feat, or scare a devil from his wits.”

Richard Mainey, who had married another sister of Fr. Gerard tells us :

“I had not been long in London before it was my hap to dine at the L. Vaux his house with my brother either at Hackney or Hoxton (I do not well remember whether) ; his Lordship was not then at home, but the table was kept and entertainment given by his son and daughter. In that dinner while there

was much communication of the late possession and dis-possession of one Marwood, by certain priests and chiefly (if I do not forget myself) by Mr Edmunds. The tales that were told of that matter seemed strange unto me, as what extraordinary strength he had in his fits : how he roared like a bull, and many other things were then mentioned, which now I have forgotten."

It was from this book that Shakespeare got most of the names for his devils in *King Lear*, including Flibbertigibbet "who since possesses chambermaids and waiting-women."⁶²

But, whatever the antics that went on in his house in his absence, Lord Vaux was constantly in touch with the more tangible devil of money, or rather lack of it. In March, 1586, he offered to compound for his recusancy fines. Sir Gilbert Gerard, Master of the Rolls and Sir Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower, drew up "An abstract of the offers made by Recusants remaining in London and Middlesex, to be paid yearly unto her Majesty, to be freed from the penalty of the Statute . . .

"The lord Vaux in respect that he hath disbursed £50 for the setting forth of horses, and that his living is but small and his charges great by reason of many children, is not able to offer so much as he would, doth yet nevertheless of his own free will offer to pay yearly £80.

W. Haroudan."

Tresham, as we would expect, has more to say :

"Sir Thomas Tresham knight saith that all his lands and goods be seized into the queen Majesty's hands as well for the penalties upon the statute for not coming to church as for fines set in the Star Chamber and the Guild Hall in London before the Justices of Oyer and Terminer. And that he hath already paid into the exchequer for the same about the sum of £600 and is to pay £200 yearly to her Majesty till the said fines and penalties be fully satisfied. Besides he is indebted otherwise at this present a thousand pounds or thereabouts being the remain[der] of a debt of £4,000 which he did owe six years past for the payment whereof he did then sell out the one half of his lands. Also he hath nine children not yet provided for and divers of them marriable. Likewise Cuff

hath him in suit for divers sums of money upon the penalty of the law, how much he doth not certainly know. For which causes he is not able to give so much as he would. But he doth willingly offer to pay yearly £100. And further he saith that if in case my Lords of the Council shall think it too little, he will with all humbleness pay so much more as their Honours shall think meet.

Tho. Tresam⁶³

These offers were apparently not accepted, for they were both indicted at Westminster on 3 December, with twenty-three others, for not going to church, for the four months ending 30 November.⁶⁴

CHAPTER III

THE FATEFUL YEARS

I

BY May, 1586, Mary Queen of Scots had been a prisoner in England for eighteen years. In the eyes of Catholics she was the rightful successor to the throne, and the fact that she was a Catholic made her the more acceptable. Tresham and Vaux were prepared to wait patiently for the death of Elizabeth, though they would have been less than human if they had not looked longingly to Mary for relief from the fines and penalties that were grinding them down. But there were some who were willing to go to the lengths of murdering Elizabeth in order to put Mary on the throne, and early in this summer of 1586 a plot was concocted with that end in view.

The principal conspirators were Anthony Babington, a young Catholic of twenty-five, and a priest named Ballard. They had some support among the English exiles, and from Don Bernadino de Mendoza, who was now Spanish Ambassador at Paris.

Babington had been closely connected with Henry Vaux in the underground movement and, as we have seen, was friendly with Lord Vaux. Ballard was also well known to Henry, and some of the other conspirators were regular visitors at Sir Edmund Peckham's house at Denham, if not at Hackney as well. There is still considerable obscurity surrounding the details of the plot, but it is generally agreed that the government had wind of it from the first and carefully nursed it for their own ends. By their spies and by renegade priests they were kept informed of the principal actors, and they kept a vigilant eye on Lord Vaux's house at Hackney.

On 26 May a spy who signs himself "AB" sends Walsingham the names of ten priests in London, and his list includes Fortescue, which was the *alias* of Ballard. These priests, he says, receive their relief from Edmunds the Jesuit, "who receives the same of Mr. Henry, that daily collecteth money for the same purpose."¹ This was Henry Vaux. In June another spy reports that a

priest named Langdale had landed in England, and that he was resorting to Lord Vaux.² In July the names of Vaux and Tresham are included in a "catalogue of such men in England as the papistical fugitives make account to be assured, if any foreign power should come to invade this realm."³ In August Henry Vaux figures in a list of the "company that Mr. Babington did usually frequent."⁴ And a few days later Mendoza, sending the King of Spain a list of the Catholic noblemen who were alleged to be ready to revolt, ventures to draw on his imagination :

"In addition to these there are Lord Vaux, Sir Thomas Tresham, Sir Thomas Fitzherbert, Sir John Southwell, Sir William Catesby. Lord Vaux and those whose names follow his have not been informed of the business, as they are declared Catholics, and are consequently held prisoners by the Queen, and under very heavy money penalties, but it is confidently assumed that, as others far less interested are joining the design, they certainly will do so."⁵

It was only among the Catholic exiles that any hope was entertained that these prominent Catholics would support an invasion of their country, and they were singularly ill-informed. By this time the plot had already miscarried. Ballard was committed to the Tower on 15 August, and before the end of the month a large number of arrests had been made, including that of Babington. It is still possible to trace in the prison lists the thinning out of the London prisons to make room for the expected haul of rebels.⁶ Babington, Ballard, and twelve others were executed at the end of September. Elizabeth considered that the normal death of a traitor was not painful enough for them.

"I told her majesty," wrote Burghley on 12 September, "that if the fashion of the execution shall be duly and orderly executed, by protracting the same both to the extremity of the pains in the action and to the sight of the people to behold it, the manner of the death would be as terrible as any new device could be, but therewith her majesty was not satisfied."⁷

The Babington plot provided useful evidence against the Scottish Queen, and on 25 September she was moved for greater security to Fotheringhay. But there is nothing beyond the

evidence given above to connect Vaux or Tresham or Henry Vaux with the plot, and they were never taxed with it. But their friendship with the principal conspirators must have made them more noticed than ever.

It was at the height of this plot that an event occurred that was to have repercussions on the Vaux family comparable to the visit of Campion to Harrowden Hall. In July, 1586, two more Jesuits slipped quietly into England. One was the gentle poet and martyr, Robert Southwell, a distant relative of Lord Vaux, and the other was the famous Henry Garnet. They met Fr. William Weston *alias* Edmunds, the Jesuit Superior, somewhere in London, possibly at Hackney where Weston was a regular visitor. London was not at all a safe place at this moment, and after a day or two the newcomers were taken off to a house in Berkshire that has never been identified.⁸ It was probably the residence of John Bolt, who had been music master at the Chapel Royal, but had become a Catholic, and had disappeared from Court. The Queen was furious, and threatened to fling her pantofle at his head, but he never again came within range.⁹ To this house at the same time came another musician, of such distinction that he kept his position as organist at the Chapel Royal throughout Elizabeth's reign, although he was an avowed and known papist. This was William Byrd.¹⁰

"If all had fallen out according to our pleasure," wrote Southwell, "we should have sung Mass with all solemnity, with choice instruments and vocal music on the very feast of St. Mary Magdalen [22 July]. This however was put off to the next day, and I could not spend it there, being called elsewhere."¹¹

So here in this lonely house, on the very eve of the discovery of the Babington plot, Fr. Garnet celebrated his safe arrival in a way that always pleased him. There are several references to his singing High Mass in the midst of his perils, and a Frenchman whom he later employed for a time, has recorded that on his first meeting with Garnet he found him "in company with several Jesuits and gentlemen, who were playing music; among them Mr. William Byrd, who played the organ and many other instruments. To that house came, chiefly on the solemn days observed by the papists, many of the nobility, and many ladies

by coach or otherwise. For better safety the place of meeting was changed from time to time, by which means they stayed in England with incredible security."¹²

A few days later Fr. Weston was arrested and spent the next twenty years in what we should now call a concentration camp at Wisbech. Fr. Garnet at once became Jesuit Superior. He very soon moved to Leicestershire, and made the acquaintance of Lord Vaux's two daughters, Eleanor and Anne. Eleanor was about twenty-six, and Anne no more than twenty-two, when they undertook the most hazardous task that could fall to the lot of two young women ; the task of harbouring Public Enemy number one, the Jesuit Superior.

Meanwhile Fr. Southwell had returned to London, and it would seem that he spent the remainder of this tragic year as the guest of Lord Vaux at Hackney.¹³ The house was still watched, and the government was fortunate in having the services of an apostate priest, Anthony Tyrrell, who provided information that was only too accurate. Later on he repented and made a very full confession of his betrayals. Among other things he confessed :

"I sent a new schedule to Justice Young of the names of divers priests where I understood they did haunt or lie, and among others gave him information of one Mr. Sale, a priest that for certain, I said, did lie at the Lord Vaux his house, by the which means he went himself thither in the morning and made a search."¹⁴

Justice Young raided Vaux's house at Hackney on 5 November, and the next day wrote to Tyrrell :

"As touching the Lord Vaux his house, the priests were conveyed away so that they could not be found, but these letters were found in Henry Vaux his bag with books, but he will not confess where he had them, yet he was called before the lords of the Council, and is sent into the Marshalsea."¹⁵

The two letters found were in Latin and were signed "Robert." At first it was thought that they were by Robert Persons, but it was later established that they were by Robert Southwell, and evidently entrusted to Henry Vaux to smuggle out of the country. They were sent to Tyrrell, who made a precis in

English which is still extant.¹⁶ The original Latin text is printed by Strype.¹⁷

The priest referred to as Mr. Sale is evidently Robert Sayer, who was ordained in Rome in 1585 and later became a Benedictine.¹⁸ Tyrrell mentions no other priest, but Young was evidently expecting to find more than one, and the presence of these letters in the house makes it probable that Fr. Southwell was there as well. He was certainly in some such raid at this time. He writes on 21 December, 1586 :

“Fr. Henry Garnet toils hard and perseveringly. He till now has been in the country ; I with frequent great peril have stayed in London, going also at times into the country. Twice I was in extreme danger. The pursuivants were raging all around, and seeking me in the very house where I was lodged. I heard them threatening and breaking woodwork and sounding the walls to find hiding places ; yet by God’s goodness, after four hours’ search they found me not, though separated from them only by a thin partition rather than a wall. Of a truth the house was in such sort watched for many nights together that I perforce slept in my clothes in a very strait, uncomfortable place.”¹⁹

A fuller account of the Hackney raid is contained in a report by a spy who always signs himself “II”, and who was blessed with the name of Malerverny Catlin.

“There is good lamentation made in the College of Clerkenwell for the apprehension of Mr. Henry Vaux, whom they hold to be a most singular young man. Mr. Davies and his wife were present in the chamber when he was taken, who, being in some doubt of themselves, gave out that she was sister to Mr. Marbury of the Pantry, to whom Newall being greatly beholden, passed them over with friendly speeches. Sir Thomas Tresham and Bawd [his lawyer] of Hoxton were that night sent for by my Lady Vaux to give advice what course was best to be taken in the cause and behalf of her son Henry. After long talk they concluded to leave him to his own answer which they are persuaded will so wisely be framed as he shall not need any other means of deliverance.

“These people hold opinion that the Scot Queen shall not

die: yea they say plainly her Majesty dare not put her to death for fear of afterclaps. But God grant she may not live to endanger us any more with foreclaps. They have entertained a new hope, namely that the messenger now come from France will either alter the case, or at the least work a pause until some further remedy may be found, for (say they) it is a French 'vye' that must win the game in the end.

"My Lord Vaux kept Newall the pursuivant from entering his house, until my Lady had conveyed her little casket which she would not for five hundred pounds had been searched."²⁰

Another spy, one Lucas, in an undated report, throws some light on Mr. Davies and his wife. He says that Davies "sometime was all in all with Mr. Shelley now condemned," and that the said Davies informed him "that they had long ridden up and down that sort to avoid troubles for not going to church: that now they were riding to my Lord Vaux and to Sir Thomas Tresham about secret causes, but what, I could not learn except through much trying which might have bred suspicion, but this day they have been with me again, advising me to depart out of London."²¹

Even after this raid the house was still carefully watched. On 29 November Catlin informs Burghley that "There is one Thomas Harris, a trusty servant of Mr. Henry Vaux. Much might be found out in him if he were apprehended."²²

There is no certainty that Fr. Robert Southwell was in the house at the time of this search. It is, however, a curious fact that in the same volume of manuscripts in the Harmsworth Collection²³ are poems by Southwell and by Henry Vaux. It is possible that they were part of the loot found in Lord Vaux's house at Hackney.

II

The Vaux family were wrong in supposing that Elizabeth would not dare to put her "dear cousin" Mary to death. It is true that Walsingham wrote, on her behalf, to Sir Amias Paulet, Mary's jailer at Fotheringhay, intimating that her Majesty would be relieved if he would quietly murder his charge, but Sir Amias wrote a noble refusal, and carefully kept copies of both letters, while returning the original for destruction, according to his

orders.²⁴ So her Majesty was forced, reluctantly we hope, to sign the death warrant, and Mary was executed on 8 February, 1587.

The Queen's only serious rival was thus eliminated and the Catholics deprived of their best possible rallying-point. For, though many of them looked to Spain for deliverance, there were many more who would not purchase their freedom at the price of a Spanish victory over England. This fact became abundantly clear a few months later when Spain was busy preparing the Armada.

Under the threat of invasion the Council addressed a letter to the Deputy Lieutenants of the counties dated 4 January, 1588.

"Whereas her Majesty have thought it most convenient, being advertised sundry ways of the great preparations that are made abroad of shipping and men, to provide all things necessary to defend any invasion or attempt that might be made against the realm or other her highness' dominions, and amongst other things, considering how of late years divers of her subjects by the means of bad instruments have been withdrawn from the due obedience they owe to her Majesty and her laws, in so much as divers of them most obstinately have refused to come to the church to prayer and divine service. For which respects being so addicted it is hardly ventured to repose that trust in them which is to be looked for in her other good subjects, and it is also certain that such as should mean to invade the realm would never attempt the same but upon hope which the fugitives and rebels offer to give, and assure them of those bad members that already are known to be recusants.

"It is therefore thought meet in these doubtful times they should be so looked unto and restrained as they shall neither be able to give assistance to the enemy nor that the enemy may have any hope of relief or succour by them. Wherefor her Majesty's pleasure is, your Lordship shall cause due enquiry to be made what number of recusants are in that county and of what quality and ability they be of. Wherein such gentlemen as have been commissioners before in those matters are able to instruct you.

"And thereupon to cause the most obstinate and noted

persons to be committed to such prisons as are fitted for their safe keeping ; the rest that are of value and not so obstinate to be referred to the custody of some ecclesiastical persons and other gentlemen well affected, to remain at the charges of the recusant, to be restrained in such sort as they may be forthcoming and kept from intelligence the one of the other.”²⁵

This order seems to have been anticipated, for on 7 December, 1587, Thomas Scriven writes to his master, the Earl of Rutland,

“The Lord Vaux is committed to the Archbishop of Canterbury ; Sir John Arundell to the Dean of Pauls ; Sir Thomas Cornwallis to the Bishop of London ; Sir Thomas Tresham to the Bishop of Lincoln ; and so the other recusants of habits severally committed to the charge of several persons.”²⁶

Vaux and Tresham are graded as “not so obstinate,” and not sent to the ordinary prisons.

Tresham was confined in the Bishop of Lincoln’s palace at Buckden (Hunts.), where Queen Katharine of Aragon had been imprisoned a half a century before, and a part of which still stands. In a long letter written on 25 March, 1590, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Tresham dates his committal as “in the end of Michaelmas term was two years.” The term ended on 25 November. He goes on

“In their custodies we remained full seven months. The enemy’s powerful navy then under sail, we all were immediately removed forth of sundry counties to one prison in the Bishop’s palace at Ely. The very next morning after our placing in close prisoners’ wise in the palace, muſters of that Isle was taken upon the green before the palace gate, and there in martial wise we beheld what greatly grieved us, to be by unheard of accident exempted forth of so requisite and honourable a service. The same first day of that our there arrival, it pleased the Lord Lieutenant (one endowed with many good complements of nature) to come up into the gallery among us, where we being all in presence before his honour, he honourably discoursed to us the cause of our commitment ; by what means we came to Ely, being formerly ordered to have gone to Wisbech ; what the gentleman was under whom we should be kept ; how we ought to demean

ourselves in prison, especially in that turbulent time; finally what speedy gathering together her Majesty's forces in all places was, to withstand the malignity of the common enemy."

As the Armada approached, "in that time of fright and rumour, . . . our coming so many gentlemen of account forth of sundry counties, all meeting at one time to be committed to Ely palace, where hath not been known any laymen to have been imprisoned, and in that part of the realm which is strongest and safest, and that at the very instant of invasion, as finally kept in such strait sort of guard, must need argue . . . that your lordships did notoriously suspect us of disloyalty as favourers of the invasion . . . which went in many places for current among them who were not few in number, and some, not of the very meanest calling in that Isle, bloodily threatened us, in case the enemy did once set foot on land."

Even after the Armada was routed it was deemed necessary to keep the prisoners in protective custody.

"Thus when we held ourselves in most security, and daily expected delivery, immediately after that victory, a far more dangerous storm was raising against us . . . for where before it was only muttered against us in private that we were not good subjects, now was it grown to be in most men's mouths that all papists (so pleaseth it them in scorn to term us Catholics) were traitors, and everywhere invectives made to have us by superior power cut off, as men unworthy to live, for that while we lived her Majesty should not be in security or the realm freed from invasion."²⁷

The prisoners were moved to Ely on 15 July, 1588. They numbered fourteen in all, including four knights. Besides Tresham were Sir Alexander Colepeper, Sir John Arundell, and Sir William Catesby. Colepeper wrote a long account of his sufferings which supplies us with these names and much else.²⁸

In the autumn the government published *The Copy of a Letter sent out of England to Don Bernadin Mendoza, Ambassador in France to the King of Spain*. It was claimed that this letter (in Spanish) was found among the effects of Bl. Richard Leigh, a secular priest who had been martyred in August. It has been republished in the *Harleian Miscellany*, Vol. II. It gives a highly mendacious account of the prisoners at Ely, minimising the rigour

of the persecution in general and of their sufferings in particular. "They do remain in the bishop's palace there, with fruition of large walks about the same, altogether without any imprisonment other than that they are not suffered to depart into the town or country." But this letter is a fraud. The original draft, heavily corrected, is now in the British Museum, and it is all in the handwriting of Lord Burghley himself.²⁹ Sir Alexander's account is far otherwise :

"Their imprisonment was in this form, viz. To be close prisoners in the palace there, having no more liberty but the palace, the court, the orchard and the leads (the leads next the street excepted), and the windows next the street so closed up that they might not be opened. They were every night locked up in their chambers. They might send or receive no letters but their warden must first peruse them. Neither might they speak with any person but in his presence and hearing. The knights and chiefeſt ſquires were allowed two men apiece, and the residue but one man apiece. Each knight payed weekly for his own and his men's diet 33/4. Every ſquire with two men 28/8, and the others 20/- apiece. Every knight was allowed a pint of wine at every meal, and every ſquire half a pint. Their wives might not come to them at any time."³⁰

After the defeat of the Armada they were still kept in Ely. On 22 October, Dr. Pearne, Dean of Ely, and Dr. Legge, vice-Chancellor of Cambridge called on them and endeavoured to persuade them to subscribe to a protestation of allegiance that cunningly confused the Queen's rightful authority with her claim to ecclesiastical supremacy. They all refused to sign, and each drew up his own protestation of loyalty, but these were not accepted.³¹ Tresham acknowledged the Queen as his law-sovereign *de jure et de facto*, "in all readiness defending her royal person from violence, and preserving this realm and all other her Highness' dominions from invasion, against all persons without exception ; be it Prince, Pope, or potentate whosoever, or under what colour or pretext soever the same shall be attempted."³² Without violating a man's conscience no government could demand more.

On 29 November, the Privy Council instructed Richard

Arkenstall, the warden, to take bonds of Tresham for his appearance, and to release him "as he was fallen sick through his restraint of liberty."³³ Before this could be done another letter arrived from the Council ordering Arkenstall to conduct all his prisoners to Lambeth, for an interview with Archbishop Whitgift.³⁴

"When they came before him, every man hoping to go home, plain contrary to their expectations they were confined to six miles about London, and there or within that compass every man to choose a place of abode, for which they had certain days liberty granted them, and then to return to him again and to enter every man into a bond of £2,000 to keep within the precincts of that house that he had chosen for his abode."³⁵ Tresham chose his own house at Hoxton, signed bonds of £2,000 before the Archbishop on 16 December,³⁶ and was presumably with his family for Christmas. In his wife's account book is the entry: "At Newyeartide and in Christmas £15. 10. 4d., whereof to trumpeters £3."³⁷

In spite of the universal loyalty of the recusants in the face of the threatened Spanish aggression, the government celebrated the victory by executing, within the space of two months, no less than twenty-seven Catholics, including nine laymen and a woman. These executions began on 28 August, when eight men suffered. In order to spread terror among the Londoners they were carried out at widely separated places, and none were at the usual gallows at Tyburn. New gibbets were erected for the occasion, and in place of the customary hurdles the prisoners were carried pinioned in carts, and the quartering was omitted. Three were conveyed to Mile End, where two were executed, and the third, William Gunter, a priest, was taken thence to Holywell Lane, not so very far from Lord Vaux's house at Hackney, and hanged outside the Theatre there which James Burbage, the actor, had built some ten years before. Then the Sheriffs returned to Newgate, took three more victims to Lincolns Inn Fields and Clerkenwell, and returned a third time to take two more, this time on horseback, with their hands tied behind them and their feet tied under the horses' bellies, to Brentford.³⁸ There was never any pretence that these men were less loyal than Sir Thomas Tresham. They were guilty of being priests

or of harbouring priests: they died under the statutes of 1585 that Vaux and Tresham had striven in vain to avert.

There is no record of how Lord Vaux fared in the custody of the archbishop, but he was presumably released about the same time, for he was present in parliament in February and March, 1589, after an absence of five years.³⁹

Before the end of July, Tresham got permission to go to Rushton. His wife's accounts mention "gifts at Lambeth upon his delivery, charges growing first in procuring his remove from Ely, and since for his liberty into the country."⁴⁰ He was not, however, left unmolested. In addition to his huge fine of £20 a month he was asked in February, 1589, to make a "loan" to the Queen. He excused himself on the plea of his "manifold payments to her Majesty, £2,800 and more within the last eight years,"⁴¹ or something like £30,000 in modern money.

Tresham's relative freedom was short lived. In the spring of 1590 rumours of another attempted invasion by the Spaniards were rife and he was again ordered to Ely. But it seems that Vaux was not restrained this time and continued at Hackney. On 21 March, 1590, Lady Tresham wrote to Burghley asking that her husband might, for his health's sake, be imprisoned at Banbury, which would be nearer to Rushton.⁴² At this date he had not yet left Hoxton, for on 25 March he wrote the long, indignant letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, from which I have already quoted. In it he refers to his visit to the Archbishop "on Thursday last," 19 March, when he had been too surprised and distressed to answer his grace's "grave speech."

Speaking in the name of the Catholics, "for number not few, for calling, degree and antiquity not of the basest or vulgarist sort, and for faithful deserving to the State and just demeaning ourselves towards all men (without vaunt be it said) censured not the unworthiest members of this Commonwealth . . . We ever have demeaned ourselves in all actions of civil duty, both before our imprisonments, and in the furnace of our many years adversity, as becometh faithfullest true English subjects." They are ready to return to prison, but they again beg to be allowed to fight the common enemy. They foresee they will "again be miserably overwhelmed and drenched in a sea of shameless slanders." Tresham then goes on to scout the idea of another attempted invasion, and says that "wagers will be laid five to

one, ten to one, yea twenty to one that no invasion will be here attempted this year."

"By all actions of our lives, before our imprisonment as since, by duest proof in longest adversity, we have laid wide open to the eyes of all men a matchless instance of religious loyalty . . . ; that we have willingly done or humbly endured what her Highness from time to time hath pleased to command us without all gainsay or jot of resisting, and that never to be touched or impeached other than for matter of conscience and for professing our religion, wherein most of us was born and bred up in, and wherein our forefathers and ancestors have ever lived in, since their first conversion from paganism to the Christian faith."

After repeating his reasons why Catholics refuse to go to church, he asks that

"When the enemy shall dare attempt any invasion against this realm, that then we may have that honour done us, as not to be bestowed in the rearwood, or in the battle, but in the vanward and before the vanward, to witness to the world and leave record to all posterity of our religious loyalty and true English valour in defence of her sacred person, and noble realm of England."⁴³

This was not the sort of letter to soften the heart of a man like Archbishop Whitgift, and it went unheeded. Nor was Lady Tresham's request any more successful. Tresham set off with a heavy heart for Ely, and there he remained a prisoner, though with frequent leave of absence, for another three long weary years.

CHAPTER IV

ELEANOR AND ANNE

I

WE must now leave Sir Thomas Tresham languishing in what he calls the "filthy and fennish country,"¹ and Lord Vaux living under restraint at Hackney, and follow the fortunes of Fr. Garnet and his two young companions.

Lord Vaux had three daughters by his first marriage, Eleanor, Elizabeth and Anne. About 1577 Eleanor married Edward Brookesby, whom we have met with Campion, and who lent his house at Green-street, East Ham, for the secret printing press. He was the son of Robert Brookesby and Dorothy Congreve, of Shoby, near Saxelby (Leics.). Robert's second wife was a Beaumont, and Eleanor's maternal aunt. The other daughters never married: Elizabeth became a Poor Clare, and Anne lived with Eleanor.

We are left in no doubt as to the religion of the Brookesbys. In 1577 the Bishop of Lincoln writes to the Privy Council:

"In Leicestershire there is a gentleman called Mr. Brookesby, who a long time hath not come to his parish church, nor received the Sacrament: but of late being convented, he is contented to have service in his house and to resort to the same himself. And indeed service he hath, but how hard it is for me to know whether he and his wife do in reverent manner resort to the same, your honours understand. To come to his parish church he refuseth, and at the first time I was content with his obedience to have service in his house, meaning ere it were long to deal with him further. His value I have referred to the gentlemen appointed for that shire."²

Eleanor's married life lasted only about three years. Edward Brookesby died before the middle of 1581, leaving her two children, William and Mary. About the same time her aunt Maud (Lord Vaux's sister), who had married Anthony Burroughs of Burrow-on-the-Hill (Leics.), also died leaving a large family

and little money. Eleanor thereupon adopted one of her cousins, Frances Burroughs, then aged five. The Chronicle of St. Monica's Convent, Louvain, which Frances eventually entered, thus describes the adoption :

"Soon after her mother's death she was taken from her father's care, and assumed by a kinswoman of hers, Mrs. Brooksby, a young widow, and daughter of the Lord Vaux, who brought her up as her own daughter, for the most part at Harrowden House where her cousin lived. When this child came first to the said widow, she took her in her arms with tears, and said : 'I will have Frances, I will have Frances,' (having intended before to have taken another of her sisters, who was her god-daughter) 'for to this child' quoth she, 'God will give a blessing which none of the rest shall have,' which proved true indeed, for she became a Religious, and none of the rest so much as Catholic. Being committed to this her cousin's care, she was first taught to say her prayers, then instructed in Catholic religion, for this was a very Catholic house."³

Catholic house it certainly was, but it is very doubtful if the chronicler is correct in stating that it was Harrowden Hall. There is evidence that at this very time Eleanor was living in Leicestershire. On 7 August, 1581, when Campion's friends were being rounded up, Francis Hastings and Adrian Stokes, Justices of the Peace, were ordered to examine Mrs. Beaumont, Eleanor's grandmother, and find out whether Campion had been in her house.⁴ They found her a very obstinate papist and got nothing out of her. Hastings, however, in his report dated 18 August, out of love for his Queen and country, as he tells us at great length, volunteers some information that he was not asked for :

"I thought good to make known to you that other places here have as great need to be searched as this, as the house of Mr. Brookesby of Shoby, the house of Mistress Brookesby, daughter to the Lord Vaux and wife to Brookesby's son, but now a widow, the house of Mr. Smith of Ashby Folville, whose wife is most obstinately settled in popery, and the house of one Coniers that dwelleth near me. Some others there may be that I yet know not of, but all these I am sure come not at the church, unless it be Mr. Smith himself."⁵

The house of Mistress Brookesby referred to in this letter was the manor house of Great Ashby, which she had received as part of her jointure. It lies in the southwest corner of the county only six miles from the boundary of Warwickshire. The advantage of a recusant living near the diocesan boundary has been already pointed out, and the possession of another house in the next diocese made it easier to evade the law. Eleanor was soon to take a house in Warwickshire, but it would appear that when Fr. Garnet first came to live with her, in the autumn of 1586, it was at her own house which she shared with her sister Anne.

It was probably at this house that Frances Burroughs first distinguished herself, for we are told by the Louvain Chronicler that she was aged eleven at the time :

“She showed great courage when the pursuivants and other officers came to the house to search for priests, church stuff or Catholic books, which was there often to do, the rest hiding them in secret places made in the house for that purpose. But she was always let out to go up and down to answer the officers, because her courage was such that she never seemed to be daunted or feared of anything. It happened when she was but eleven years of age, a priest being at Mass in the chamber above, and another present, a great noise was heard in the house below ; and fearing it to be as indeed it was, the priest desired the gentlewoman of the house to go down, and the girl with her, to see what the matter was. They went, and in the hall found, through negligence of the doorkeeper, the pursuivants and constables entered with many swords drawn. Which the child seeing, cried out, ‘Oh ! put up your swords, or else my mother will die, for she cannot endure to see a naked sword.’ The officers perceiving the gentlewoman’s countenance to change, believed her, and put up their swords. But Frances runneth back again, pretending to fetch some wine for her mother, shut the doors, gave warning to the priests, helped to hide them, and then came back again to the pursuivants, having frustrated them in their expectation, for they could find no priest.”⁶ The Chronicle also records that on another occasion a pursuivant held a naked dagger at her breast, and threatened to stab her if she refused to betray

the priests. She answered with perfect composure, and in words worthy of Shakespeare: "If thou dost, it shall be the hottest blood that ever thou sheddest in thy life."⁷

Frances was only eleven when there arrived a weather-worn traveller in the summer of 1587. We can imagine with what pride and joy she would welcome him, for it was her cousin Henry Vaux. He had endured six months in the Marshalsea, till on 22 May, 1587, he was granted, probably because of illness, permission to absent himself for three months.⁸ He had deferred his studies for the priesthood in order to organise the underground movement. To the sorrow of his sisters, of Sir Thomas Tresham who always speaks of him with love and reverence, and of all who knew him, he died at Great Ashby in November, 1587. The parish register records under that year's burials:

"Mr. Henry Vause brother of old Mrs. Bruxby, November XIX."

His death was probably sudden as he died intestate and letters of administration were granted to his sisters in the following March.⁹

In his life of Campion, Fr. Persons pays him the following tribute:

"That blessed gentleman and saint, Mr. Henry Vaux, whose life was a rare mirror of religion and holiness unto all that knew him and conversed with him. He died most sweetly and comfortably in England, having resigned long before his death, and in his perfect health, his inheritance to the barony to his younger brother, reserving only a small annuity to himself whereby to live in study and prayer all the days of his life, without marrying, as he fully resolved to do."¹⁰

Fr. Gerard, who had later the use of his library, speaks of him as a "very learned and studious nobleman, and well known for his piety . . . If he had lived a little longer he would assuredly have been a member of our society, for on his death-bed this was the only thing that caused him regret, viz. that he could not then be admitted into the Society, a thing he desired most earnestly."¹¹

Of the four children that Edmund Campion had met at Harrowden Hall, Elizabeth had found peace in a foreign convent, and now Henry's perilous work was ended. But for Eleanor and Anne this was only the beginning of sorrows.

II

On a very dark and cloudy night in November, 1588, three months after the defeat of the Armada, a small boat grounded on the sands of the Norfolk coast, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Baſton. Two men stepped out, and the boat was rowed back to a sailing vessel anchored off shore. Whichever way the men turned they ran up against dwelling houses, and set the dogs barking. As they had no wish to call attention to themselves they entered a small wood, and there in the pouring rain they waited for the dawn. They were two Jesuit priests, John Gerard and Edward Oldcorn.¹²

This was the third Jesuit landing that was to have a vital influence on the fortunes of the Vaux family. Like Campion and Garnet before him, Gerard was to be sheltered by the Vauxes, and bring one of them to the very jaws of death.

Having arranged a meeting-place, the two Jesuits separated, and each found his own way to London. Owing to the imprisonment of Fr. Weston, S.J., Fr. Garnet had by now been appointed Jesuit Superior. "By good hap," says Gerard, "we found the Superior then in London, though his ordinary abode were then in Warwickshire, almost a hundred miles from London."¹³ There is no hint that the Vaux sisters were with Garnet in London, though Anne seems normally to have travelled about with him. Certainly it was her practice in after years. In 1598, one Francis Taylor, who complains that the Jesuits had stolen his wife, writes to a priest :

"I pray you ask Fr. Walley [Garnet,] your great case man or statesman, or term him as you please, with what face he can carry a gentlewoman up and down the country with him, and thereby give such bad example to his subjects to take my wife from me."¹⁴

But whether or not Gerard met the sisters on this visit to London, he was soon to know them well enough, as were all

the other Jesuits in England. For it was the custom of the Jesuits to meet twice a year, and normally in the house where the Superior was living. Perhaps the manor house at Great Ashby was too small for this purpose. At all events, before the end of 1588 Garnet had found another house in Warwickshire. Where exactly it was has never been discovered. As we shall see, it was within easy reach of Hindlip (three miles north of Worcester), and it was probably within easy reach of Great Ashby as well. It had a hiding-hole that was a deep cave or culvert with a few inches of water in it. These details suggest Baddesley Clinton, the home of the Ferrars, a family that always remained Catholic. Baddesley is within easy riding distance (twenty to thirty miles) of both Hindlip and Great Ashby, and it is significant that one of Garnet's trusted servants came from Rowington, which is the next village to Baddesley.

There is an undated report about this house by an informer named George Snape, who had spent some time as a student at Rheims, and who returned to England in August, 1582. He speaks of his departure from Rheims, eight or nine years ago, so that this report belongs to 1591 or 1592. But the information in it refers to a somewhat earlier period. "Mrs. Brooks" is presumably Eleanor Brookesby, and Snape is under the impression that she was living nearby, and that it was her sister who was married, though he then proceeds to call her Mistress Vaux. But in spite of this confusion the report is not without interest :

"Moreover I have heard for a truth, and I do verily persuade myself that it is so indeed, that in Warwickshire dwelleth one of the Lord Vaux his daughters, whose husband's name I marked not, and yet I think I have heard him named. She is not far distant from one Mrs. Brooks, a recusant, if I be not deceived. This Mrs. Vaux entertaineth commonly a priest or two in her house, and is resorted to by divers others, so that sometimes there are to be found in the house at one time five or six priests together. They have very safe and close places of conveyance in the house for them to lurk in, as it should seem, for Mr. Hodgkins hath been there divers times and searched the house, when there hath been three or four together, and yet could find none of them. If I had thought

so much of the matter as I have done since I would have informed myself more in particular of the situation and state of the house, but took no great heed at that time to the reporter's words."¹⁵

It would be difficult to preserve secrecy about the meeting of so many together, and Snape seems to have heard some local gossip, inaccurate like most gossip, but in this case not without foundation. Yet in spite of the obvious risk of all being, captured together, these meetings were convened for years with the utmost regularity. They were for the purpose of what we should now call a retreat. As Fr. Oldcorn explained in later years :

"The cause of their meeting was that twice a year at least they were by their rules to give an account of their conscience to their Superior, and to renew their vows. And for the doing thereof they had allowed three days, and came thither commonly on the Thursday, and the other two days they made themselves ready for the Sunday."¹⁶

These meetings were usually held after Easter and in October and up to 1592 in the house in Warwickshire. That at Easter 1589, however, was held in London, for Garnet writes soon after it to his General, in the cautious language that the times demanded :

"I wrote to your Lordship last month from the midland parts of the island where I then resided, since which I have come to London to transact business with our creditors in the Paschal meeting. A large number of them came together."¹⁷

Fr. Robert Southwell, in a letter dated 8 March, 1590, has left us his impression of one of these meetings, presumably that held in October, 1589 :

"We have altogether with the greatest joy renewed our vows, according to our custom, spending some days in mutual exhortation and conferences . . . It seemed to me that I saw the cradle of the Catholic religion which is now being born in England, the seeds of which we now sow in tears that others may come and bear the sheaves in gladness. We have sung the canticles of the Lord in a strange land, and in this

desert we have sucked honey from the rock, and oil from the hardest stone. But *extrema gaudii luctus occupat*, the end of these our joys was in sorrow. Sudden fears dispersed us, but in the end we escaped with much danger but little hurt. I and another of ours, seeking to avoid Scylla, had like to have fallen on Charybdis, but by the mercy of God we passed betwixt them both without being shipwrecked, and are now sailing in a safe harbour."¹⁸

But the meeting of which we have the greatest detail was that held in October, 1591. It is described in a Latin letter of enormous length, written by Fr. Garnet to the Jesuit General in March, 1593. St. Luke's Day in 1591 was a Monday; this would mean that all the Jesuits were absent from their stations on the preceeding Sunday. It is, however, possible that they used the New Style, according to which St. Luke's Feast fell on a Friday.

"This solemn meeting of ours was fixed for the three or four days preceeding the feast of St. Luke, so that having finished our business we might adopt this evangelist as patron of all our work. We chose for this meeting the house which we had hitherto almost always used for this purpose, belonging to the two sisters the widow and the virgin, illustrious by birth, fidelity, and holiness of life, whom I sometimes in my thoughts liken to the two women who used to lodge Our Lord, or to those holy matrons, sisters also, who continually honour and succour your whole family, especially in Rome.

"It was getting near the appointed day when, behold a Queen's pursuivant came to the house and knocked at the door. And because he was kept waiting a little while outside, until everything that betokened our religion had been put out of sight, this drunken fellow was filled with sudden fury, and said that today he had come as a friend, but because they would not receive friends with civility, he would return within ten days with others, and they would break open the doors, and shatter the very walls of the house. What could be worse!

"There was no time to let our friends know of the impending danger, and they turned up as arranged. We were in two minds what to do. However the Lord had already assembled

us, and everything connected with our gathering would be safeguarded. The only danger was from one filthy fellow who spent his days snoring in taverns, and it wasn't likely that he would forewarn us if he really intended to return. If he did come it was hardly likely to be during the only three days that we were there. Moreover it was confidently reported that he had gone out of the county, and he couldn't cross any district near adjoining ours without our friends letting us know at once, and if we had warning we had a most satisfactory hiding place in a very deep culvert. All things considered we decided to carry on as usual. After all we could hardly hope ever to hold a meeting of this sort without the Devil issuing some such threats. He had always sent one of his henchmen on previous occasions, at the very time of our being together, and though he had never actually searched the house while we were all in it, (in fact it was not known to him), we were about as much put out by his being in the neighbourhood as we should have been by his arrival at the door.

"So we passed the whole of that time in peace and quiet, but when we began dinner on the very feast of St. Luke, having finished all our business, something prompted me to say to them, that up to that moment I had risked every danger, but that I could no longer guarantee their safety, and that those who wished should leave after dinner. My premonition proved to be sound. Four of the nine left straight after dinner. Two secular priests arrived that very day, making us seven in all, and if those four hadn't left, there would have been eleven 'merchants' spending the night there, and that would have led to great confusion, as the sequel will show. Some spent the whole night, almost till dawn, discussing certain serious matters. When morning arrived the whole house had been surrounded without our having the slightest inkling of it, and all the roads were guarded as well. Our horses were being prepared for our departure, and the servants were busy about many things, some getting breakfast, some cleaning our leggings, some airing our cloaks and everything else that was wanted for a journey. (In Catholic houses all these things, when not needed, are put out of sight, so as not to give away their owners, or betray the presence of a greater number of men than it is wise should be seen in public). For some inexplicable

reason a gate in the courtyard had been left open. There was a young layman (who has since joined our ranks), who was just leaving the house, quite unconscious of any trouble brewing, when he suddenly spied a stranger. He slammed the door after him, took to his heels, and hid in a nearby copse. Meanwhile, two Catholic servants, having summed up the situation, came running from the stable, armed with farm implements, and threatened to use them on the pursuivants unless they moved away from the door. These men (who are so brave if you show fear, but so craven if you stand up to them) dropped their menaces and resorted to requests. One of them asked the lady of the house to open the door, and that then he would deal gently with her.

"Only one or two had yet said Mass, (though later on in the day they all did so), when the news spread through the house that the pursuivant was there. Doors were bolted, everyone warned, books collected, pictures, Rosaries, chalices, vestments, and all other signs of our religion were thrown into the culvert, together with the men. The mistress of the house was stowed away in a separate hiding-place of her own, both to prevent her being torn from her children and carried off to prison, and also because she is rather timid, and finds it difficult to cope with the threats and evil looks of the searchers. On this occasion, as often before when this same pursuivant paid us a visit, her younger sister (the aforementioned virgin) posed as the mistress of the house.

"At length everything was disposed of with such dispatch that not a sound could be heard through the whole house. Then the pursuivant and a companion were admitted. He expostulated with the lady for keeping him waiting so long. She answered: 'Do you think it right and proper that you should be admitted to a widow's house before she or her servants or children are out of bed? Why this lack of good manners? Why come so early? Why keep coming to my house in this hostile manner? Have you ever found me unwilling to open the door to you as soon as you knocked?'

"He turned to his companion and said: 'It's quite true. I've always had courtesy from this lady, and you can take my word for it that she was not yet out of bed. But I want to

know who that man was who fled from the house. I haven't much doubt he was a priest, and if you don't hand him over, either we stay here or take you away with us.'

"At this she was very frightened, supposing the fugitive to be somebody other than it really was, but regaining her composure she said: 'Oh, he's a relation of mine (and she glibly called him by a name that was unfamiliar in those parts), I'm starting on a journey with him today.' She had to add this, because they could see the food prepared in the kitchen, and if they had gone to the stables (which however God prevented), it would have been difficult to account for so many horses being ready saddled for the road.

"Then they set about searching the house. Everything was turned upside down; everything was closely examined,—storerooms, chests, and even the very beds were carefully ransacked, on the off chance of finding Rosaries or pictures or books or *Agnus Deis* hidden in them.

"I've no idea with what patience ladies in Italy would put up with this. Here we have been sold into slavery, and have become hardened to this sort of barbarity. But on top of all this is the endless altercation with these most persistent fellows. The virgin always conducts these arguments with such skill and discretion that she certainly counteracts their persistence and their interminable chatter. For though she has all a maiden's modesty and even shyness, yet in God's cause, and in the protection of His servants, *virgo* becomes *virago*. I've often seen her so exhausted by the chronic weakness that she nearly always labours under, that she found it painful to speak even two or three words, yet on the arrival of the pursuivant she suddenly rallies to such an extent that she has been known to spend as much as three or four hours arguing with him. If there is no priest in the house she is full of apprehension, but the very presence of one so heartens her that she is convinced that the Devil can have no power in her house.

"She had every reason to feel secure from the Devil during this particularly rigorous search. She says the pursuivants behaved just like a lot of boys playing Blind Man's Buff, who, in their wild rush, bang into the tables and chairs and walls and yet haven't the slightest suspicion that their playfellows are right on top of them and almost touching them. So it

was with the searchers. One of them, she says, was banging on the walls with furious energy, shifting sideboards, and upsetting beds, and yet, when his finger or foot touched the very place where some article was hidden, he was completely blind to the most obvious significance of what he had touched. One instance was quite miraculous. A pursuivant picked up a silver pyx for containing the Blessed Sacrament, and put it down again at once as though it were the most ordinary thing in the world. Before the very eyes of another lay folded a dalmatic of great value, and yet, though he unfolded everything else he never even touched this. I should never finish this letter if I put down everything that happened in this and similar searches, all worthy of our admiration. All I will say is that the zeal and courage of Catholics is never more in evidence than at times like this.

“The pursuivants soon grew tired of their fruitless search, and were invited to breakfast. Then they wanted to interview that brother of ours who had fled; he was a priest, and they couldn't turn a blind eye to that. Having first extracted a promise that if he proved to be no priest he would be suffered to have his liberty, she ordered him to be called in from the copse. He denied that he was a priest, and his word was accepted. For at that date the heretics were certain that no priest could deny the fact without grave sin. Now we gather, from the replies of your theologians that it is lawful to do so. Many accept this opinion at once, but there are some that are scrupulous, because it is laid down in the Canons of the Apostles that a priest who, out of fear denies his priesthood, may be deposed. They are in doubt whether this new opinion is sanctioned by human law, or is deduced from the divine.

“After breakfast the whole house was straitly searched again, but when they saw they had no hopes of success, they accepted a bribe for the lady herself, and for the man who fled, and they departed. . . .

“You can imagine our joy and our mutual congratulations when we were brought out after their departure. There could be no lack of angel guardians in a house so angelic, and where so many holy women were consecrated to God. I had such confidence in their devotion and loyalty, which I had experienced over a period of many years, that I went to

the hiding place with about as much apprehension as I should have felt in moving from one room to another at a time when there was nothing whatever to fear."¹⁹

Fr. Gerard also wrote an account of this raid, and it adds a few more details. The five Jesuits were Garnet, Gerard, Oldcorn, Southwell and Stanny. Oldcorn had resided some time with Fr. Garnet and the sisters after his arrival in 1588, but by 1591 he was chaplain at Hindlip or Henlip, which was only a short distance away. The raid began at five in the morning, and lasted four hours. Fr. Southwell was about to begin Mass when the alarm was given. They not only hid everything, but turned their mattresses, lest the warmth should indicate that the beds had been slept in. The cellars were searched with candles. The hiding place was underground, and Gerard was standing in water all the time.²⁰

Besides the light it throws on the characters of Eleanor and Anne there are other points of interest in this letter. It suggests that there were a considerable number of devout women and that they were following the regular observance of a religious house. Anne at all events had taken the vows of religion privately and was to all intents and purposes a nun. Her small property belonged to the community and her life was directed by Father Garnet. Perhaps this applied to most of them but we have very little information about the others.

It was a somewhat motley community. Besides the Vaux sisters there were Eleanor's two children and the intrepid young lady, Frances Burroughs. There was a nephew of Fr. Persons, always referred to in Fr. Garnet's letters as the "wryneck," and there was the "old woman." This was Fr. Persons' old mother who proved such a nuisance when, as often happened, the community had to make a rapid strategic withdrawal. There was also Fr. Garnet's personal servant, a diminutive cockney carpenter who had a twisted leg and walked with a limp. He was known to all his friends as "Little John." His true name was Nicholas Owen, later a Jesuit lay brother. He had an extraordinary genius for constructing hiding-holes and travelled over most of England for this purpose.

This miscellaneous household found it necessary to change their house periodically and sometimes at short notice, and it

would be a hopeless task to attempt to trace the many houses rented by the Vaux sisters for their perilous work. These houses were taken in the names of protestant friends, the inmates went under false names, and everything possible was done to escape the vigilance of spies and informers. Where the pursuivant failed we cannot hope to succeed, for most of our information is derived from spies' reports.

Of the five Jesuits who shared the hiding place in this memorable raid, Fr. Robert Southwell was the first to fall into the hands of the enemy. He was captured in London on 30 June, 1592. Topcliffe was given the unique privilege of keeping him in his strong room at Westminster, and torturing him to his heart's content, without even the formality of a witness. His facetious letter²¹ to the Queen describing the torture is a credit neither to sender nor receiver. The victim was kept under such filthy conditions, that when his father visited him and saw the lice crawling over his sores, he petitioned the Queen to have him brought to a speedy trial. The answer was to send him to the Tower. There he languished for more than two and a half years, and the only friendly visitor he had in all that time was a little dog belonging to the Countess of Arundell whose chaplain he had been. At long last he was brought to trial. He looked so young that they poked fun at him, and called him the boy-priest. He was thirty-three when they butchered him, in February, 1595, and English literature is the poorer for his untimely death. Ben Jonson said that he would have been content to destroy many of his own poems to have been the author of the *Burning Babe*.²²

Immediately after the arrest of Southwell, in June, 1592, Fr. Garnet moved his large family to London, and nothing more is ever heard of the house in Warwickshire. In July he writes to Rome stating that he cannot remain in London except at very great risk,²³ but he gives no hint that his new house had been discovered.

The parliament which met in the spring of 1593 passed even more stringent laws against the Catholics; laws that were obviously designed to crush them out of existence. All persons over sixteen who refuse to go to church, or are found attending unlawful conventicles, are to be committed to prison till they conform. If they refuse to conform, they must within three

months solemnly abjure the realm. If they refuse to do this, or having done so do not repair to their appointed port of embarkation, or having embarked return without special leave of her Majesty, they shall suffer death as felons. A new fine of £10 is instituted for those who harbour a recusant for a month, except nearest relatives who have no other home. Popish recusants convicted are ordered to repair to their dwellings, and to notify the authorities of their address within twenty days. They are prohibited from going more than five miles from their houses under forfeiture of goods and chattels, and of all their lands for life. Lord Vaux attended this session with great regularity, but without effect. It was his last appearance in the House of Lords.

The first knowledge that the authorities seem to have had of Garnet's residing on London was not until 1594. In the previous December, Fr. Henry Walpole, S.J., who has already appeared in this narrative at the execution of Campion, landed on the Yorkshire coast, and was immediately apprehended. He was taken to the Tower and tortured fourteen times. A certain amount of information appears to have been wrung from him in his agony, though some of his alleged confessions are open to grave suspicion of forgery.²⁴

In June, 1594, they tortured him into admitting that he had met William Tresham in Brussels, and that Tresham "gave me a piece of gold to deliver to one of his sisters, and bade me tell her that if he could not get a better condition he would sue for leave to return home into England, but he desired me not to go to her myself, at least a good space after my coming, for fear of breeding her trouble." This sister must be Lady Vaux, for Tresham had no other sister. On another occasion he confessed that he had heard abroad that Garnet "kept at Mrs. Vaux her house in London. I never knew where he was. At Mr. Wiseman's also I have heard he hath been, at Braddox." This was all he would tell however much they tortured him. He probably could not have told them where Garnet was. He had been captured on landing, and had had no chance of reporting to his superior. There is evidence that Garnet was carefully screened, and that Jesuits coming to England were not told where he lived. Thus Thomas Wright, who came in 1596, informs us that "Persons commended me unto Gerard by token that he gave him his Breviary at his departure, and by that token

he should direct me to Garnet, otherwise called Walley, being a private man only to Papists known." This may account for Garnet's charmed life during these years of special vigilance and increased rigour. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that having got all the information they could out of Walpole, they martyred him at York, on 7 April, 1595.

Braddox or Broadoaks, the other residence mentioned by Walpole, was already known to the authorities. It had been searched on 1 April of this year, and Fr. Gerard who was hiding there had a narrow escape. The pursuivants lit a fire in a grate that was not all that it seemed, and Gerard, who was hiding beneath this dummy, wooden hearth, got the benefit of it.²⁶ He at once moved to London, and with the help of Little John found a suitable house. But he was not to survive for long. While this house was being prepared he had the use of the house of a Mr. Middleton in Holborn, and here on the night of St. George's Day, 1594, he and Little John were betrayed by a servant, surprised in bed together, and carried off to the Counter in the Poultry. Little John was later moved to Newgate, and on 6 July, Gerard was moved to the Clink.²⁷ Thus the second of the five Jesuits, who had shared the hiding place in the Warwickshire house, fell into the hands of the government, and one can imagine the anxiety of the two sisters at this second tragedy. We can as it were feel the pulse of their fluctuating hopes and fears, as we read the letters that Garnet wrote under their roof.

"The Friday night before Passion Sunday," he writes to Persons in September, "was such a hurly-burly in London as never was seen in man's memory; no, not when Wyatt was at the gates. A general search of all London, the Justices and chief citizens going in person; all unknown persons taken and put in churches till the next day. No Catholics found but one poor tailor's house at Golding Lane end, which was esteemed such booty as never was got this Queen's days. The tailor and divers other there taken lie yet in prison, and some of them have been tortured. That mischance touched us near; they were our friends and chiefest instruments. That very night had there been there Long John with the little beard, once your pupil [Gerard], if I had not

more importunately stayed him than ever before. But soon after, he was apprehended, being betrayed we know not how. He will be stout I doubt not. He hath been very close, but is removed from the Counter to the Clink, where he may in time do much good. He was glad of Mr. Homulus [Little John] his company, but he has been taken from him and carried to Newgate, whence he hopeth to redeem him again."²⁸

Garnet's own whereabouts had never come to light, but some time in this same 1594 he thought it prudent to move.

III

For two years Fr. Garnet and the sisters, with their numerous household, had lived in London, apparently unmolested. Their life was as near conventual as the troubled times would allow. There would be the regular round of prayer and spiritual exercises, but punctuated by the constant coming and going of Jesuits to consult their superior, the bi-annual meetings, the arrival of mysterious messengers with letters from the Jesuit General and Father Persons, and the despatch of Father Garnet's long letters full of news of the brethren, written with equal facility in English, Latin or Italian; letters which seldom miscarried, in spite of the growing industry of the secret service, and false brethren. Yet life was lived at a tension difficult for us to imagine, with the constant news of arrests and executions to remind them of their danger: the ever-present shadow of the Tower, the torture-chamber and the awful death at Tyburn, which was the penalty for being a priest or for harbouring one. And Little John limps about doing odd jobs, or rides off into the shires, wrapped in Sir William Wiseman's cast-off cloak, "of sad green cloth with sleeves, caped with tawny velvet and little gold stripes turning on the cape,"²⁹ doing a laborious and essential work, which nobody could do better than he.

Fr. John Gerard had spent these last three years in the Clink. He had enjoyed a good deal of freedom, and was able to send letters to Fr. Garnet and to other friends. Early in 1597 he received a visit from Little John, and entrusted to him certain letters from abroad to deliver to Garnet. These proceedings were witnessed by a fellow prisoner, one William Atkinson, a

priest who had recently reached England from Spain, had immediately apostatised, and was now in the Clink only as a spy on his brethren. As a result, Gerard's cell was searched, and though nothing incriminating was found, he was moved to the Tower on 12 April. He spent the first night in the lowest cell of the Salt Tower, and next morning by the dim light of early dawn he found a poignant memorial of one whose Gethsemane three years before we have already recorded. Cut with a knife on the wall was the name, Henry Walpole, and there it may still be seen.

Two days later he was examined by Edward Coke the Attorney General and others. The principal matter that they wanted to learn from him was the residence of Fr. Garnet, but on this point Gerard gave them them no assistance whatever. They then decided to employ their own hideous means of making a prisoner speak. They had already procured a warrant to torture him, and on this same morning his ordeal began. Gerard has himself left us a vivid and harrowing account of the scene: the solemn procession by candlelight to a vast underground crypt; the array of instruments of torture, of each of which he was promised a taste; the iron rings forged on his wrists; the rush baskets he was made to mount so that these rings could be fixed by an iron bar to two staples high above his head; the removal of the baskets one by one till he hung by his hands.

"Hanging like this I began to pray. The gentlemen standing around asked me whether I was willing to confess now.

" 'I cannot and I will not,' I answered.

"But I could hardly utter the words, such a gripping pain came over me. It was worst in my chest and belly, my hands and arms. All the blood in my body seemed to rush up into my arms and hands and I thought that blood was oozing out from the ends of my fingers and the pores of my skin. But it was only a sensation caused by my flesh swelling above the irons holding them."

This form of torture was known as Topcliffe's rack, after the inventor, who claimed, with every justification, that it was far more painful than the ordinary rack, and could be continued till the victim fainted and could be repeated daily without actually causing death. Fr. Gerard does not say at what hour he was

hung up, but he estimates that it was after one o'clock when he fainted. The rush baskets were then replaced till he revived, and then removed till he fainted again. "This they did over and over again when the faint came on, eight or nine times before five of the clock." As he still refused to speak, William Waad, an assistant who later became Lieutenant of the Tower, flew into a rage and said "Hang there then till you rot."

Early next morning, with his hands so swollen that he could not wear his doublet, he was hung up again until dinner time, but still he would not betray his friends. His jailor had shown the greatest compassion all through, wiping away the sweat that poured down his face, and afterwards cutting up his food and putting it into his mouth, as he was quite unable to use his hands.³⁰

Fr. Garnet was kept informed of what was happening in the Tower. All through the early summer his letters contain references to the torturing of Gerard, and he knew quite well that his own safety depended on the constancy of his brother Jesuit. We can imagine the agony of soul of the Vaux sisters, as they waited anxiously for the latest news from the Tower.

For three weeks Gerard could not use his hands, and it took the rest of the summer to restore them to normal. When his strength had somewhat recovered he bribed his jailor to buy him some large oranges. He cut the peel into little crosses and squeezed the orange juice into a jug. He made a pen out of a tooth-pick, and with swollen hands that could scarce hold a pen, wrote letters in orange in a hand that looked like the first crude efforts of a small child. Orange juice is a quite effective disappearing ink. On porous paper it is completely invisible, and when warmed by a fire it becomes permanently visible, and as clear as ink, but brick-red. The little crosses were wrapped up in the seemingly blank paper, and the jailor was persuaded to deliver them to Catholic prisoners in the Clink. Many of these letters were to Fr. Garnet, and the shaky, ill-formed writing must have made the rigour of his suffering only too painfully evident to the Vaux sisters. By this means a stealthy correspondence was kept up between Gerard and his friends.

In the Cradle Tower, which is some fifty yards from the Salt Tower, and on the edge of the moat, there was a Catholic layman named John Arden. He was a Northamptonshire man, belonging

to a prosperous family at Evenley. He had been condemned to death in 1586 for alleged conspiracy in the Babington plot, but his life was spared, and he had now languished in the Tower for ten years. He had permission to take exercise on the leads above his cell, and from there could see Fr. Gerard. They communicated first by signs and later by letters in orange juice, and in September Gerard bribed his jailor to let him visit his new friend, and even to spend the night with him. Together they planned a hazardous bid for freedom. Fr. Garnet had been informed of it and agreed to co-operate.

On the night of 3 October, 1597, the eve of Fr. Gerard's thirty-third birthday, two friends, John Lilly and Richard Fulwood, rowed down the Thames, but as they were about to land on the narrow strip of ground that separates the river from the outer wall of the Tower, they were disturbed by someone coming out of a house nearby. They paddled about for some time, decided it was too late, and rowed back to London Bridge where the rising tide swept them into one of the piers. The little boat was wrecked and they were lucky to escape with their lives. Nothing daunted they tried again the next night, and landed undetected on the wharf outside the wall that skirted the moat. Fr. Gerard had bribed his jailor to allow him to spend the night with John Arden, and they managed with their knives to force the door that gave access to the leads. They threw a weighted string over the moat and over the wall, lugged up a heavy double rope, and hooked it over a cannon. Then John Arden began the perilous descent. The rope was nearly horizontal and he had to work his way, hand over hand, across the moat and the wall beyond. However, he reached their rescuers without mishap.

Then Fr. Gerard followed. The rope had become rather slack, he was very heavy and had not recovered completely from his torture. After going a few yards face downwards suddenly

“My body swung round with its own weight and hung under the rope. The shock was so great that I nearly lost my hold, for I was still very weak, especially in the hands and arms. In fact, with the rope so slack and my body hanging beneath it, I could hardly get on at all. At length I managed to work my way as far as the middle of the rope,

and there I stuck. My strength failed me, and I was quite out of breath."³¹

After several rests and much anxiety he eventually reached safety, hardly able to stand, and the four men rowed stealthily away in the darkness. It was a little before dawn on 5 October, 1597. And it was a near thing, for Fr. Gerard had scribbled a note exonerating the jailor, and when Sir John Peyton, the Lieutenant of the Tower, visited Arden's chamber that morning he "found the ink in his pen very fresh, and seemed to be very lately written with."³²

After rowing some distance they landed and split into two parties. John Lilly went off with John Arden to Gerard's London lodging, while Fulwood accompanied Fr. Gerard to Fr. Garnet's house in Spitalfields where Little John was waiting for them with horses.

"And there Little John and I, a little before daylight, mounted our horses, which he had ready there for the purpose, and rode straight off to Father Garnet, who was then living a short distance in the country. We got there by dinner-time, and great rejoicing there was on my arrival, and much thanksgiving to God at my having thus escaped from the hands of my enemies in the name of the Lord."³³

IV

Towards the end of November, 1597, a few weeks after Gerard's escape, a Jesuit set out all alone for England from the College at Valladolid. He was a native of York, and it was later alleged that he had been at school with a boy named Guy Fawks, though Guy was his junior by seven years. His name was Oswald Tesimond, *alias* Greenway.

At Bilbao he met two other priests also on their way to England. One of them was Roger Filcock, who was destined to die a martyr in 1601. They boarded a boat that was already overcrowded, and Tesimond lay on a cargo of chestnuts, with hardly room to turn over. His eyes watered all the time, and he was nearly choked, for he lay to the lee of the kitchen stove. They reached Calais in nine days, but their troubles were not yet over. Calais was in the hands of the Spanish troops, and

was being blockaded by Dutch ships. The only hope was to slip in under cover of darkness. They reached the mouth of the harbour after dark, but there they were suddenly becalmed. Next morning they were attacked by the Dutch warships. They managed to lower the women into rowing boats, but the men had to plunge into the sea under a shower of shot that does not appear to have been very deadly.

Tesimond made for Brussels, and there he met a young man named Ralph Ashley, whom he had known at Valladolid, where he had been employed as baker in the College. The work had proved too heavy for him, and he was now looking for passage to England. He also met a secular priest whom he calls Thomas Standish, but whose true name appears to have been Francis. After several years on the English mission, Standish had gone to Rome, and was now on his way back. These three, after many adventures, in which the over-cautious Standish was a constant embarrassment, reached Flushing, and bluffed their way aboard an English fishing smack, one of a fleet of thirty or forty which was about to sail to England to dispose of their catch. Contrary winds had already kept it in port for some days, and this had not improved the fish. It took four days, instead of the usual twenty-four hours, to reach Gravesend, during which time Tesimond fed entirely, but not enthusiastically, on raw salted herrings. It seems an anticlimax to add that they landed at London without mishap on 19 March, 1598. This was the fourth Jesuit landing that was to affect the destinies of the Vaux family.

Tesimond made discreet enquiries after Fr. Garnet and found out where he lived. He has left us his own account of these adventures³⁴ and he lets us into the secret of Garnet's whereabouts :

“It was about twelve or thirteen miles from London, near a village called Uxbridge, and the name of the house was Morecrofts. I and my companion [Ralph Ashley] walked thither, and arrived there an hour or two before sunset. We were received with the warmest welcome and the greatest charity imaginable. I found with Fr. Henry two or three others Fathers of the Society who had come to confer with him on their affairs.”³⁵

Morecrofts is evidently the house in the country referred to by Gerard after his escape. Garnet had rented it from Robert Catesby, the conspirator, in 1594.³⁶ In April, 1597, he writes to Rome to say that he is leaving the house in which for three years he has lain securely, because it is the wish of his Superior, but he begs that he may be allowed to return to it,³⁷ and perhaps this permission had been granted in the meantime. This house has long disappeared, but the name survives. Tesimond continues :

"We had been with Father Henry two or three days at most, when one day towards evening a man came out from London on purpose to tell us that the Privy Council had had notice of that house, and that without doubt the Queen's officers would come to search it that very night. It was a perfect marvel . . . to see the great peace and security of soul that Fr. Henry showed when he heard this news. In truth he proved himself to be an old soldier and experienced captain, accustomed to such assaults. . . . He directed us to go towards London and to wait for him at a village called Brentford, about half way between the house we were leaving and London. His object was that we should go to another house in London which he kept so as to be able to retire to it in such emergencies."³⁸

Garnet, on horseback, overtook them at Brentford, and "We got into a boat and reached our house in the suburbs of London, near a place called the Hospital [Spitalfields]."

The house in Spitalfields is evidently the one "on the outskirts of the city" to which Gerard and Richard Fulwood made their way after the escape from the Tower. Now that Morecrofts was discovered it was presumably given up, and it is never mentioned again. Ralph Ashley stayed only a few days with Fr. Garnet, and was then sent to Hindlip as servant to Fr. Oldcorn. Tesimond, on the other hand, became a more or less permanent member of the little community at Spitalfields.

Efforts to track down the Jesuits were increasing in intensity. Two months after this move, in May, 1598, Garnet writes to Persons :

"There hath been terrible searching of late. This week past they kept the house of Mr. Abingdon in Worcestershire

[Hindlip] three days, beating down at their pleasure and eating up all the provisions. We are constrained to shift often dwelling, and to have divers houses at once, and also to keep divers houses at those times when we run away; for we cannot remove the old woman so often, and the place of my residence is like a little College never without four or five. We were yesterday five of our family, two being driven unto me for fear; and continual resort is of others unto me.”³⁹

The problem of the old woman increased as age reduced her agility, and soon after this they ceased to hustle her about with them. It was just as well, for in January, 1599, in the depth of winter, the whole household had to get up shortly before midnight and make their escape by different paths.⁴⁰

On 21 July, 1599, Fr. Gerard’s London house was discovered and surprised.⁴¹ It was kept by Mistress Anne Line, who was martyred with Roger Filcock in 1601 for this crime of harbouring priests. At the time of the raid there were other ladies present including Mary Lady Lovell, whom we shall meet again. Fr. Gerard and John Lilly were in an upstairs room where there was an ample array of popish objects, including Gerard’s soutane and all his sermon notes. The pursuivants, before warning could be given, penetrated to the door of this very room. It had no lock or bolt, but only a latch, which the two men held down with their hands.

“Perhaps,” said Mrs. Line, “the manservant who sleeps in that room may have taken away the key. I will go and look for him.”

“Oh no you don’t,” said they, “You don’t go anywhere without us, or you will be hiding something away.”

So they went off with her, without even noticing that the door had no lock. This gave Gerard time to slip out and climb into the hiding-hole in the roof. But there had to be somebody to own the incriminating objects, so John Lilly stayed behind. When the pursuivants returned he politely opened the door to them. They asked if he were a priest and he replied that it was their job to prove it. And the soutane? Oh, that was a dressing-gown. The ladies played up to the fraud, and showed Lilly all the respect due to a priest. He was taken to the Tower

and hung up on Topcliffe's rack. He had helped rescue Gerard from the Tower, and had now saved him from certain recapture and probably death. Soon he had the opportunity, even when a helpless prisoner, of rendering a like service to Garnet.

One of his examiners was William Waad, Secretary to the Council, "a man of great cruelty towards Catholics, and above all measure hostile to our Society." He asked Lilly if he knew Garnet. The answer was, of course, in the negative.

"No?" retorted Waad with a cynical smile, "and you don't know the house he has in a place called Spital? Now that we've got you safe here, I don't mind telling you. We are quite sure that in a few days' time we will have this man Garnet here to keep you company."

Lilly said nothing, but he managed to get a message out of the Tower, and once more the household moved in a hurry.⁴² There must have been many other alarms and excursions of which no record remains, for Fr. Tesimond tells us that he was personally present on some ten occasions when the house was searched.⁴³ But enough has been said to show under what strange and strained conditions the Vaux sisters lived during the last fourteen years of the sixteenth century. Before the new century was many weeks old they moved yet again, and rented a house that was to become notorious, and where their memory still lingers.

CHAPTER V

DOMESTIC TROUBLES

I

AT his trial before the Lords in the Star Chamber, after only three months of close confinement, Tresham had referred to the deterioration of his mental powers. After twenty months we should expect to find a marked change in him, but there is not much evidence of softening of the brain in his later letters. His style grows more fantastically euphuistic, but he would probably have considered that an improvement. He took an ever growing interest in mystical numbers and covered pages with notes that are to us unintelligible. But he still shows his old fire and humour and grasp of legal affairs.

But with Lord Vaux it was different. He was nine years older than Tresham, and was forty-six when first condemned. He was a more sensitive character, and probably never had much more business capacity than his poetic father. The anxiety of the times and the long weary months of solitary confinement had played havoc with his health and made him prematurely old and completely incapable of managing his own affairs. When he was finally released from the Fleet he was a broken man. The crushing fines, the long neglect of his estates, the irksome restrictions on his liberty of movement, all combined to render the task of recovery well-nigh impossible. It was inevitable that he would have to lean on another; it was but natural that he should lean on his life-long friend Sir Thomas Tresham. It was Tresham who drafted all his letters, advised him on everything concerning his estates, and on much that it would have been politic to have left alone.

Lord Vaux's first concern, upon his release in 1583, was to try to restore the family fortunes by a profitable marriage for his eldest son. But, as we have seen, Henry had decided to become a priest. Lord Vaux describes the situation in a letter, of 13 April, 1583, to Mr. Farmer, probably Mr. Fermor of Easton Neston.

"I have to desire your friendly advice in passing certain assurances from my eldest son to his brother. By means of my long imprisonment and otherwise I am growing greatly in debt, and have been forced to sell divers lordships notwithstanding which I have still many things to discharge, money to find for my daughter's preferment in marriage, and lastly, to advance my house by some good marriage. And in truth, Mr. Farmer, I was of late offered a very worshipful match and no small portion of money for my son, whereupon I made offer thereof to my eldest son, [Henry]. He flatly refused to marry. I then instantly desired him before divers of our friends that then he would be contented, in respect of the premises, that I might make my most benefit to his brother, [George] and that he would resign to him his interest, to which he at length willingly condescended, and we have agreed that you should be the man to decide what assurances shall be passed over. The bearer, my dear friend, will inform you more particularly therein. The sooner it is done so much the better, and I pray you to use secrecy therein, lest it be impeded by some of my first wife's kinsfolk."¹

But it was not until two years later, on 20 April, 1585, that the agreement was drawn up. By this deed, Henry Vaux reserved a small annuity for himself, and all the rest of the family property was to be settled (after the death of Lord Vaux) on George Vaux, his half-brother, and in default of heirs, to his younger brothers, Edward and Ambrose. The trustees were Gilbert Hussy of Oundle, Thomas Law of Ashton, and John Flamsted, of Rushton, all noted recusants. The settlement was to be void if George married without permission of his father, mother and brother, or a majority, of whom his father must be one. There was a further clause enabling Lord Vaux to sell certain lands, with the consent of Henry and George, for the advancement of any of his other children, but not for the payment of his debts or those of George.²

There were, however, two people whose feelings were not considered in this agreement. One was George Vaux, and the other was the lady he was in love with. This was Elizabeth Roper, great-niece of Margaret Roper, Thomas More's favourite daughter. And there were issues at stake of even greater

significance than the rehabilitation of the family fortunes. The families of Vaux and More had been brought together at Rochester on the eve of the Reformation; now they were to be bound together in one flesh. George married Elizabeth at Harrowden on 25 July, 1585, in defiance of his father and Tresham.

This marriage was, what was so rare in those days, a real love match, and Tresham seems to have thought that this made it only the more disgraceful. Yet Elizabeth had much in her favour. She belonged to a great Catholic family, and she was no pauper. But Tresham never has a good word for her. Even when he writes of the marriage seven years later, his ire has not cooled. In his eyes it was a "brainless match." As late as 1599, when it is fourteen years old, he still cannot speak of it without bitterness:

"I withstood her marriage to my nephew, first in respect of the relief Lord Vaux should have had by his son's marriage, being offered £3,500, and divers other great matches; next that his lordship's eldest son should not be frustrated, who relinquished his birthright to relieve his father by his brother's marriage, when he himself professed a single life, and lastly that in regard of her creditless carriage when she went for a maiden, I thought her an unfit wife for my nephew."³

However, Tresham was neither consulted nor considered and the marriage took place at Harrowden,⁴ George being two months short of his majority, and his father confined to Hackney. George was immediately disinherited, and the embarrassed property passed automatically to Ambrose, as Edward died at Hackney on the very day of the wedding.

Ambrose was at this time a big, brainless boy of seventeen, a student for four years at some college on the continent. His father sent for him. Ambrose applied to the English Ambassador at Paris, Sir Edward Stafford, for a passport, and set out from Rheims on 10 August, 1586,⁵ armed with the following letter addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham, Principal Secretary, and organizer of the Queen's secret service:

"Sir, my Lord Vaux having called home a son whom he had on this side the seas, he repaired unto me to crave my passport to go the more safely, which I would not refuse, but

have therewithal sent him with these my letters to your honour, to dispose of him as you shall think good: which is the course that I do observe with all them that I do know anything suspected in religion. And so, leaving him unto your honour's pleasure I humbly take my leave, at Paris 6 August, 1586."⁶

It was as well that Ambrose had even this half-hearted recommendation, for he landed in England just when the whole country echoed with the discovery of the Babington Plot.

The situation that he found was not very happy, but it grew worse in November, 1587, when Henry died, for that meant that the title would now descend to a disinherited son while all the property went to a younger brother. Such was the position when Tresham was peremptorily ordered to Ely in July, 1588.

At this stage Elizabeth's father, Sir John Roper, entered the lists. He was a lawyer by profession and more than a match for Tresham. Moreover his daughter had completely bewitched Ambrose, who would do anything she demanded. Consequently in Trinity term 1589, she and her father persuaded him to "levy a fine" on the Vaux property. The fine was an amicable composition or agreement of an action made with the leave of the court, whereby the lands in question were acknowledged to belong to one of the parties to the action. Thus in the present instance Ambrose would covenant to sell the lands to a collaborator, and when he was sued by the latter in an action for breach of the covenant, he would decide to capitulate, and, with the consent of the court, a concord was drawn up acknowledging that the lands belonged to the collaborator. The collaborator would then surrender the lands to Ambrose, who would have certain rights over them even in his father's lifetime. This solemn farce, which was not abolished till 1833, involved long and complicated procedure and was much beloved by lawyers. Ambrose's collaborator in this transaction was one Anthony Paleheart, a servant of Sir John Roper, and, whatever Ambrose was told, the object was to restore the Vaux property to George. This fine was levied secretly, and neither Lord Vaux nor Tresham was informed.⁷ Tresham has many references to this "sinister fine" which prevented Lord Vaux from disposing of any of his

lands to meet his debts, and equally impoverished Ambrose in the long run.

Early in the following year, 1590, a reconciliation was effected between George Vaux and his father, and Ambrose was asked to surrender his right to the forfeiture. At this critical moment Tresham was again sent to Ely, and without his support Lord Vaux was quite incapable of conducting even the simplest transaction. Consequently in May, 1590, Vaux petitioned the Privy Council, and a letter was sent to Richard Arkinstall, Tresham's jailor :

"Whereas the Lord Vaux is to pass and assure certain lands unto his son in marriage, and to others this term, which (as his Lordship allegeth) concern his whole estate ; forasmuch as such conveyance and assurance cannot be made (as we are credibly informed) without the personal presence of his brother, Sir Thomas Tresham, being greatly interested therein, these are to require you to suffer Sir Thomas to repair to London, and to take bonds of him to her Majesty's use in £500, to return unto you by the end of next term, being the 8 July, to remain with you as he is at present."⁸

Sir John Roper would have much preferred that Tresham had stayed at Ely, and left him a free hand. As it was, the dispute went on all through June, Tresham fighting for the helpless Lord Vaux, and Roper for his own daughter and son-in-law. Ambrose also proved difficult, and refused to surrender his rights unless he was assured of other lands in recompense. It was only now that Tresham heard of the sinister fine, which made the situation even more chaotic. As Trinity term approached its end, and there was no prospect of agreement, the Privy Council was called upon for arbitration. Roper resorted to every device to attain his end ; on 4 July, four days before Tresham was due to return to Ely, he wrote to Burghley :

"I am sorry to be thus troublesome unto you, but I have set down truly and as briefly as I can the particularities of the course of the causes long pending betwixt the Lord Vaux and me, wherein Sir Thomas Tresham hath intruded himself as the disposer of all my Lord Vaux his state, and the commander of him and all his, who dare no more offend him than a child his master having a rod in his hand.



SIR THOMAS TRESHAM (1543-1605)



THE EXCELSIOR
MAY 24th 12 AM 1911

THE EXCELSIOR
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"To your Lordship I speak it as to the most honourable friend I have living. Sir Thomas Tresham, upon malice to his nephew Mr. George Vaux for marrying my daughter and refusing to be disposed by him, did poison the books of conveyance of all my Lord Vaux his lands with such a condition, as Mr. George Vaux and all his children were in danger thereby to have been disinherited and undone for ever, had not myself, by the Providence of God, taken an opportunity offered by the younger brother Ambrose Vaux, to prevent the mischief thereof. Which hath so much offended Sir Thomas Tresham as (whatsoever is pretended in shew) I must have no end with my Lord Vaux, except such as he will make, whereby he may still rule and reign over my Lord and all his. And for that purpose and in policy to continue his liberty, doth he set on the Lord Vaux to sue unto your Lordship and the rest of the Lords for more time of liberty [from Ely], for the ending of his causes, and to slander me in saying I am the let and hindrance of the end, when if Sir Thomas Tresham had never dealt in the causes, all matters had received an end long since. And for mine own part your Lordship seeth what reason I have to desire and hasten an end, having already paid to the Lord Vaux for my daughter's portion £1,500 in money, besides £400 worth of jewels and apparel, and have to this day no manner of jointure assured for her to live by, if God should call her husband.

"Pardon me, my good Lord, in making thus bold with your Lordship to impart unto you the state of these causes, for although my Lord Vaux gave to one Mr. Phillips £60, as I am informed, to procure this time of liberty which Sir Thomas Tresham hath (of late) had, in my conscience he had been better to have given £100 to have missed his company, assuring your Lordship that except he may be secluded from dealing betwixt my Lord and me, and that some persons indifferent may be chosen to hear and determine the causes betwixt us, I never expect any good or godly end."

He enclosed "A brief note how the estate of the lands belonging to the barony of the Lord Vaux hath been settled and disposed by the said Lord Vaux, and by his eldest son Henry Vaux." It rehearses the agreement summarised above, and stresses the

clause that prevents Lord Vaux from selling lands to pay his debts.⁸

Next day, Sunday, 5 July, Lord Burghley interviewed Lord Vaux and Roper. The latter had somehow got hold of an account book, which seemed to show that Tresham had appropriated the manor of Great Houghton, that belonged to Lord Vaux. There in the council room, in the presence of many witnesses Burghley denounced Tresham as a thief. Sir John Roper in another letter to Burghley, dated 8 July, describes the sequel.

“Your Lordship’s speeches at the council table concerning Sir Thomas Tresham were speedily delivered unto him by the simple Lord Vaux. Whereupon Sir Thomas Tresham came unto me and confessed that indeed he passed in my Lord Vaux his book a manor of my Lord Vaux’s. But he protested he had paid for it, which I am not bound to believe because my Lord Vaux will affirm it, who will affirm or deny whatsoever he will have him. After this he requested me to let him know (if I could) how your Lordship came to the understanding thereof. I answered him : I know not, but being a matter extant of record and published to many, your Lordship might easily hear of it.

“Now, my good Lord, for what I know how much he would malice me, and what a revenging course he will take against his nephew my son-in-law and my poor daughter if he should know that I delivered these notes unto you, I humbly beseech your Lordship they may not be seen of others, for that they were written by a man of mine, whose hand is known to many.

“But, my good Lord, concerning the causes betwixt my L. Vaux and me. I do assure your Lordship that except it be ordered by the Lords of the Council that my Lord Vaux shall make choice of some one learned man in the law, and I to choose one other, to hear and determine the causes depending betwixt us, and that Sir Thomas Tresham may be severed from us, and discharged from dealing further therein, his liberty [from Ely] will last long enough, and our causes will never have end. For in good faith, my Lord, I know he is determined to rule and overrule all, and would so settle my Lord Vaux his estate (if he could), as my son-in-law and his children should be

bound to him and his for ever. Whereunto (for my part) I will never consent."¹⁰

As may be imagined, Tresham's indignation at these aspersions knew no bounds. He wrote to Burghley on 7 July a letter, the enormous length of which must have tried Burghley's patience, and would equally try the reader's. But it is so characteristic of him, both in style and in matter, that I give two typical extracts :

"Blame me not, right honourable, that I was at the first woefully perplexed with the Lord Vaux his certifying me, and measurelessly amazed with a world of mouths, that everywhere thundered at me, in what sharp and very severe sort your honour on Sunday last at the Council Table, in the public presence of many standers-by and suitors, did sentence me there to the Lord Vaux as one covetous, covenous and godlessly treacherous to his Lordship and his. Great reason (I confess) your Lordship had, upon semblance of so confident and credible report, as specially upon producing evidence for better colour of approved testimony to your honour, to censure me therein as very a varlet (under your Lordship's correction be it said) as I undoubtedly aver him or them to be whosoever (I except none) that thus audacious, untruly and shameless sinfully dared insinuate such malevolent suggested slanders into your presence against me. Even so, more cunning therein was packed (I assuredly think) than likely to be couched or thronged up in any one malignant brain, which could contrive so notoriously to abuse your honourable judgment, in whom neither passion, affection or levity or credit hath dominion.

"Therefore with the late Lord Keeper your Lordship's brother and memorable magistrate of this realm [Walsingham], I may say there was a pack : which word he used in the Star Chamber happily against the firebrand of this pack and crew. And greatest cause hath all men to point at me, and proclaim me for arrantest wrothe, that publicly at the Council Table was condemned for so miscreantly misdeameaning myself against him, whose lamentable estate hath most need to be relieved ; whose simplicity and good meaning is soonest abused : whose good will even from my cradle I have in highest degree

enjoyed: and firmeſt friendship by the ſpace of many a prenticeſhip, in ſtrongest ally between us united: who hath alſo loved me longeſt, eſteemed me deareſt, and by the ſpace of full twenty-ſeven years (in matters of greateſt weight) moſt truſt in me hath over reposed. Principally that the ſame to be ſo ſeriously delivered and deteſted by your Lordſhip, whoſe words with moſt men ſtand for oracles.

“Notwithſtanding, when time had wrought that effect amid my turbulent paſſions, which reaſon forthwith worketh in many, and then duly had anatomized that calumniaſion, I evidently beheld manifold inſtances of no unpleaſing contents. Firſt, apted thereby with cauſe neceſſarily to manifeſt . . . how infinitely the Lord Vaux and all his are beholden to me . . . ; next the apparent detecting the palpable treachery of theſe bad, bad creatures, who maſk under the pleaſible vizard of integrity and ſicophant ſanctimony their venomous and viperous drifts to the loathing of them by your Lordſhips and all others that ſhall hear of ſo impious an outrage.”

He reminds Burghley how, in a previous caſe, he had arbitrated and found for Treſham. He then ſpeaks of Burghley’s kind reception yeſterday of Treſham’s ſervant, “amid your ebb of leiſure and flow of ſuitors,” and his great capacity for ſifting the evidence “as wherewith preſently to ſatisfy yourſelf that I cauſeſſy was defamed and your Lordſhip audaciouſly abuſed.”

“The wrong done unto yourſelf I leave to your good conſideration. But that which ſo wretchedly hath been plotted againſt me to my public infamy, now blazed through city, court and country, I humbly beſeech and beg it of your Lordſhip that I may by your honourable good means be duly reſtored to that which is with me of higheſt price, and whereof I violently have been deprived. My good name (heretofore neither by friend nor foe at any time called into queſtion) was defaced at the Council Table.”

He expends another three hundred words, aſking for his caſe to be tried before their lordſhips, finiſhes with an apology for “wherein my diſtempered pen hath failed in decorum,” and on top of all this craves an interview.¹¹

Treſham was due back at Ely on the morrow, which would

have left Roper triumphant, but leave was granted him to remain at his house at Hoxton till 10 August. Subsequently this leave was extended till 13 September, and Lady Vaux went personally before their Lordships on 9 September to beg a further extension, which was granted.¹² In October order was given to liberate all the prisoners at Ely and Banbury, upon bond, presumably because the invasion season was at an end. Hence Tresham did not return to Ely, and could continue his fight with Roper on less unequal terms. The dispute dragged on another whole year, till on 7 May, 1591, the Privy Council instructed the Lord Chief Justice and the other Justices of the King's Bench to expedite the business.¹³

On 9 November, 1592, Tresham wrote a very long letter to George, that was not calculated to improve the situation :

“Need shall not I, Nephew, to betake me unto penned arguments, when the world will witness the aforegoing memorable proofs of my kinsmanly care in advancing your everyway good, unable in each respect to be sampled [exampled] in this age. Many and many years I much more busied my brains on your behalf than did I on my eldest son's, you, in my shallow conceit greatlier needing the same in regard of aboated wanting elder advice to underprop you in your youth ; though otherwise Francis no less I feared in those rather madding days. In his holy sight I protest it (before whom prepensedly to dissemble were impious), that as I uncessantly continued that careful course till the very fatal time of your brainless match, so hath the lamentable sequel thereof since proved the heaviest cross that happed me in this my twelve years imprisonment and adversity.

“Then forewarned I you and your choicest friends of manifold inconveniences likely thereby to ensue : deeper wedging my Lord your father into inspeakable misery : kindling of unkindness twixt your natural parents, who all their lives lived in godliest concord : bereaving and defacing them at their own doors of their wonted unprizable credit in the country : you and yours at wars with them and theirs : dissolving the authentic amity continued divers descents between Harrowden and Rushton families, when inferior ties wrought far availabler effects : the baning of true virtuous

habit in you : the spoiling of an honourable barony : the beggaring of yourself and your posterity : lastly, not least to be dreaded, the little comfort in your bosom and bed, if not (which God forbid) an irreconcilable separation, when right of reason shall have rubbed off the cankered rust of misdominion and track of time completely unveiled the guileful mask of blinded fleshly affection. The violent frustrating the original intention of your adopting, to repair the ruins of Harrowden baned Barony, and to relieve your father's pitiful distress : also to defray his debts, together with levying your sister's marriage money without further sale of land, I omit, being at that very time palpably perspicuous, and gainsaid by none.

"These as a Tresham to your house I faithfully foretold, but credited was as the Trojan prophetess, who, always foretelling the truth of future events, yet never affiances thereat given until too late to look for remedy. Which of all these, within fewer than few years have not been apparently put in practice, discontentment with your wife alonely excepted, wherewith I will not meddle, unfeignedly wishing unto you both happiest and completest content in that behalf."¹⁴

Well might Tresham have expended a little of his solicitude on his own son Francis, who, far more than George Vaux, was to "bereave and deface" his family's credit.

All this time Sir John Roper and his daughter were, according to Tresham, playing on Lord Vaux's simple-mindedness to detach him from Tresham and throw him into the rapacious arms of Roper. Tresham's own account, in this same letter, 9 November sounds incredible, but is worth quoting for the evidence it gives of Lord Vaux's growing enfeeblement of mind.

"She [Elizabeth Vaux] did read a letter to his Lordship as written from her father, that if his Lordship would dissolve friendship with me and leave my fond devices (for so it pleased her to term them) and thereby wholly rely on him, that he would undertake the defraying his Lordship's debts, his daughter her seventeen hundred pounds marriage money, maintain him in as honourable port as he any time lived in ; should have his musicians, his hounds and hawks for the fields and river. Moreover would satisfy Mr. Carrol for the purchase of Irthlingborough parsonage, and presently improve his

Lordship's revenue, now not six hundred pounds by year, to above one thousand and seven hundred pounds by year . . . finally conjuring his Lordship that unless he would then renounce amity with me, and be ruled by her father, that he would abandon his Lordship and leave him to shift for himself so as he could, and never would take further care of his well doing. These baits and hooks were so artificially coloured and suited that his Lordship, nothing dreading foulest fraud to lurk where filialest faith ought to abound, greedily swallowed them, disliking only with that intolerable barb of breach of strongest linked friendship between us. Hereupon my Lord your father forthwith hasted to Hoxton, acquainting me with these glorious gilded promises. I sorrowed in my soul to see him so godlessly cozened."

Lord Vaux accepted the offer provided it did not involve breach of friendship with Tresham, and notified Sir John Roper. Roper protested that he had never written any such letter.¹⁵

II

One reason why Vaux and Tresham were anxious to reinstate George was that Ambrose would not have made a very satisfactory administrator. He was a chronic spendthrift and borrower, and the black sheep of the family. As early as November, 1589, when he was eighteen we find him, with his father, borrowing £200 from Peter Roos, a fellow of the Middle Temple.¹⁶ In August, 1590, he borrowed £200 from Silvanus Scory, son of the apostate Dominican, who became successively Bishop of Rochester, Chichester and Hereford.¹⁷ Both father and son had a reputation for lending money. In September he borrowed £100 from Anthony Denton, to be repaid "within two months next after the return of the said Anthony Denton from the city of Venice."¹⁸ In June, 1593, he borrowed £160 from William Crabbe, a dyer of London, to be repaid within six months after the return of one Nicholas Annesley out of the city of Venice, and in July a further £160 with the same conditions. Perhaps he was speculating in the treasures of the east that came through Venice.¹⁹ In December, 1593, he was borrowing from William Munday, perhaps the composer.²⁰

In 1591 he was in trouble of another sort, as we learn from a

letter from the Privy Council to his father, dated 15 February, complaining that Ambrose, with twenty others, "by force in the night," had carried away forty loads of barley from a barn in Irthingborough.²¹

In June, 1592, Ambrose crossed swords with our old friend Henry Norwich the "Queen's man," but, alas, this case never got as far as the Star Chamber. A letter was sent by the Privy Council to Sir Richard Knightley, High Sheriff, and others, in the following terms :

"Whereas this gentleman Henry Norwich, her Majesty's servant, hath informed us by his enclosed petition how he hath been assaulted and wounded by one William Haughton, Valentine Kellison and Robert Whitehead, by the procurement of George Vaux and Ambrose Vaux, esquires, for spleen and displeasure borne by them unto him for prosecuting some of their friends for recusancy, and although the Justices of Assize took order to have them indicted for their misdemeanours, greatly misliking the same, nevertheless (as he informeth us) they shift from place to place so as they cannot be apprehended, and continue their riotous and disorderly proceedings," we require you to arrest them.²²

What Tresham thought of this "untoward and giddy-headed young man"²³ will best be seen from a letter he sent him, on 8 March, 1593, warning him that unless he took immediate action he would lose even the trifling revenue from lands in Nottinghamshire that were his by right.

"It is here said that if you had the whole barony dispossessed you would again bestow it on your beloved sister [Elizabeth] and her sweet little ones, albeit you utterly malign her husband: therefore unlikely that you will stick with pleasuring her and hers in this, *ceteris paribus*, trifling gratuity. Wherewith having sufficiently said for exonerating the trust you formerly reposed in me, do end, wishing that you would betake you to a filial conformity and commendable carriage of yourself, which now is most infamous and monstrous.

"*Postscript.* If you fear arresting in London by your creditors you may lie at my son's lodging rather than to leave you destitute, yet had we willinger have your room than your

company, were it not charitable to relieve you in this instant distress. But I think your mother will be at Hoxton before your coming up where you may be best provided.

"This admitteth of no delays for should you, you will prove a right younger brother having neither wit, credit, land or money, yea I think I truly may say scant clothes to put on your back.

"Matched with matchless nephews to my unspeakable grief.

Tho. Tresame."²⁴

Three years later Ambrose's creditors could wait no longer : Peter Roos caused him to be arrested and imprisoned in the King's Bench, where the treatment was "somewhat hard."²⁵

III

In 1590 Lord Vaux had been allowed to return to Northamptonshire after an absence of nine years. But the days of quiet study in the bosom of his family were at an end, and he was launched on to a sea of troubles quite distinct from the financial worries just recounted.

On 20 November, 1590, John Palliday, Henry Park, John Gates and Ralph Cox, all yeomen of Irthlingborough broke into a piece of land in Irthlingborough known as Wringtale, which Lord Vaux had held peaceably for thirty years, and on the following night, armed with pikes, staves, swords, daggers and other weapons, came to the said inclosure, and "the ditches feulls and mounds thereof in most tumultuous, riotous manner did break, pull down and overthrow." Lord Vaux sent his servants to remonstrate with them and they were met with reproachful and despiteful words. Thereupon Lord Vaux prosecuted them in the Star Chamber in February, 1591. Their defence was that Wringtale belonged to the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough, and that the defendants had always enjoyed the rights of common there, being tenants at will to the said Dean and Chapter as they profess they can prove. They claim that they have the right to graze their cattle there "from the time the hay there growing is mown and made into cocks and carried away, until the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin." They deny all violence.²⁶ What the verdict was we are not informed, but the property at

Irthlingborough seems to have been a constant bone of contention.

All this time Lord Vaux was, of course, subject to the penalties for recusancy, but, judging by the following letter he obtained a respite in 1592. It was sent by the Privy Council to the Commissioners for Recusants in the County of Northampton, and dated 14 September, 1592.

"By your letter of the 4th of this present, certifying your proceedings with the principal recusants of that county, we understand some doubt you make (as we conceive) whether the Lord Vaux and his sons (whom you signify to have conformed themselves in matter of religion) may, notwithstanding their conformity, be proceeded withal according to the direction of our former letters. For answer whereunto we have thought good to let you know that the course appointed to be taken is intended against those only that shall be found obstinate, and to such as have or shall yield to conformity we wish all favour and good encouragement be given. To your second doubt, whether you shall restrain such as since your last certificate are fallen away in religion, forasmuch as it is meant that all such as are or shall be found disobedient in that kind, being persons of the better sort, should be committed, if any be that are newly fallen away you shall proceed with them as with the rest."²⁷

What exactly the Commissioners meant by certifying Lord Vaux's conformity we shall never know. He appears in the Recusant Rolls which begin in the previous Michaelmas term, and there he remains till his death.

The problem of recusant wives remained for years unsolved. Could conforming husbands be chargeable for their obstinate wives? The letter goes on to offer a solution :

"Lastly, whereas you are doubtful what you shall do with such women as come not to the church, though their husbands be conformable, in respect that by their example their whole families or the greater part of them refuse to resort to the church or continue in their wilful recusancy, of these, if there be any principal women that by their obstinacy be cause of such disorder, we think it meet that you commit some five

or six of the best of them, so to remain until by their husbands they may be persuaded or wrought to conformity."

Early in 1593, Tresham was allowed to return to Rushton after an absence of twelve years. But there was to be no entertaining of friends. Lady Tresham wrote to his cousin Thomas Tresham of Newton begging him not to call as "he is to avoid concourse of friends, and therefore during his abode in the country neither meaneth to visit or be visited, but of as few as he may." She states that another gentleman granted similar liberty had so displeased the Council by entertaining his friends, that he was nearly called back to his former restraint.²⁸

Lord Vaux was summoned to attend Parliament, which was to meet on 19 February, 1593. On the 18th he wrote (or rather Tresham wrote for him) a pathetic letter to Burghley, excusing his absence :

"My debts and miseries beyond measure multiplied, I am come up raggedly suited and clothed unfittest to give dutiful attendance on royal Presence. Yea, I protest to you on my faith and honour that I am moneyless and creditless to provide me better or defray my daily expenses, unless my brother, Sir Thomas Tresham help to furnish me with both, whom to urge in that behalf I may be ashamed, having already to my unspeakable heartgrief thrust him lately into forfeit of two thousand four hundred pounds in providing me three hundred pounds in summer past to pay Mr. Carrol for a gainful purchase which he also compassed me.

"Moreover my parliament robes are at pawn to a citizen, where I have offered large interest (unable to disburse the principal) to borrow them for some few days, also offering my bond with surety to redeliver them. Nevertheless I cannot obtain them, albeit I yesterday did write to the Lord Mayor of London to friend me therein."

He signs himself

"Infortunatest peer of parliament for povertie that ever was, W. Harrowden."²⁹

Shades of Nicholas Vaux !

His money affairs were still in hopeless chaos, and on 15 March³⁰ he presented a petition to Parliament explaining that

he had passed many of his estates to his sons, "Upon fatherly affection only, without any other consideration, divers of them by negligent impugning oaths, so that he cannot dispose any of his said lands." There is a hint here that he had settled his lands on his sons to evade the recusants fines, but this, of course, is never alluded to in the official documents. On 1 April, 1593, his petition was granted, and a private act was passed, entitled "An Act to give liberty to the Lord Harrowden to sell certain lands for the payment of his debts."³¹

This session of Parliament passed the "Statute of Confinement" which prohibited recusants from travelling more than five miles without a licence signed by two Justices of the Peace and the Bishop of the Diocese. This was a grievous affliction for the papists as it applied not only to the heads of families, but to all convicted recusants, men and women alike. Tresham was soon to find how onerous the new law was, for he had not been long at Rushton before urgent business required his presence in London. He had no difficulty in getting a licence signed by Lord Mordaunt and Mr. Watson, two Justices, but Bishop Howland of Peterborough refused his signature, not out of any hostility but simply because he maintained that the law did not come into force for forty days and no licence was required. But Tresham had entered into a £2,400 bond for the repayment of money borrowed by Lord Vaux of "a merciless griping usurer." He would not travel to London without a licence for fear of forfeiting another bond, and was thus constrained to forfeit the bond of £2,400. "My house is the cause of this my present hell; Rushton, I may say, is my ruin."³²

There are several references in his letters to his "five mile tie," and in a postscript to a letter to Merrill Vaux on 8 May, 1593, he writes :

"I write to you rather than my sister [Lady Vaux] assuring myself that you stir not above five miles from Artleborowe [Irthlingborough] whatsoever your mother dareth or doeth."³³

Tresham had undertaken to return to Ely by the last day of June, under pain of forfeiting a bond of £2,000 to her Majesty. "Even so, should I repair hence thither without licence from the Bishop and two of the Justices of the Peace, I should fall into the danger of the new statute." The Bishop's signature

had not been obtained by 28 June, but fortunately, on the next day he heard that the Privy Council, at the petition of Lord Vaux, had renewed his leave until the end of August.³⁴

On 25 March, 1594, Tresham was in trouble again, and suddenly found himself a close prisoner in the Fleet, denied a servant and unable to see his wife and children, even in the presence of a warder. He was charged with levying from his tenants service of horse and footman, corresponding with the French Ambassador, and sending venison to the prisoners at Wisbech. But the principal charge was the old one that made him so obnoxious to the government:

“What maketh him to seek that greatness and credit over all the Recusants, that they depend upon him for advice, direction, and in all matters when they are brought in question?”

“By whose advice was the submission drawn that was acknowledged by the Recusants that were committed five or six years since to Ely?”

He answers that “he seeketh no such superiority or credit, and doth think himself wronged in that opinion. Being asked if he did not pen a Petition that was exhibited to their Lordships, he himself being at liberty, in the behalf of divers Recusants that were restrained for their liberty, he confesseth he was acquainted with that Petition but doth not remember that he did pen the same.” He admitted sending venison to friends in prison at Ely, but not to Wisbech.³⁵

It was in this same summer of 1594 that Tresham was attacked from another quarter. There does not seem to have been much family affection between Lord Vaux's children by his first wife and those of his second marriage. There is little reason to think that there was any combined strategy governing their tactics. But it was while Tresham was grappling with Elizabeth that he was subjected to a flank attack by Mistress Anne.

By an agreement in 1570 Sir Thomas was to receive £100 a year for fifteen years, and guaranteed to pay £500 to each of the three daughters of Lord Vaux (by his first wife) on their marriage or their father's death. Owing, however, to some mistakes in the wording, this agreement was utterly void, and Tresham contends that he never received the bulk of the money. Eleanor

had received "above eight score pounds" on her marriage, but that was all that had been paid out. Elizabeth had become a nun, and according to Tresham, Mistress Anne was unkind enough to suggest that Tresham had persuaded her to take this course in order to swindle her out of her marriage portion. Now Anne, who says she is thirty (she was thirty-two), turns her guns on her father's life-long friend.

She borrowed £40 from Tresham and converted it into lawyer's fees to fight the case. She sued Tresham in the Court of Chancery for £500 marriage portion, alleging that it was due to her, or if not to her direct, then to her father, and by his agreement, to her. Tresham contended that as her father was still alive and she unmarried, she had no claim to the money, and in any case, he should not be expected to repay money that he had never received.

We have only Tresham's account of this case:³⁶ there is nothing about it in the Court of Chancery. Judgment was given in favour of Anne, but one of the conditions was that she should go to Tresham, acknowledge her obligations to him, beg a continuance of his good opinion towards her, and pray his furtherance in helping her to the £500. This she strongly resented, protesting that it was unseemly for the daughter of a Lord to make petition to a knight. But the Master of the Rolls said that if she was so stomachful as to refuse to do it she could go without her money.

The case which began at Easter, 1594, dragged on till November, and on "This present weeping All Souls day which exceedeth all the extreme wet days of this long matchless wettest season" she pocketed her pride and made a wet journey to Hoxton. Tresham had offered to meet her in London at Lady Stourton's (his daughter) and to have a boat or two to attend her at Temple Stairs, "but she chose rather to take the foulest journey in order to take me without company, that her submission might be swallowed up in secret, and as near auricular confession as could be." She had with her "old Broksbie and a pettifogging formal solicitor of hers, with a retinue of servants" whereas Tresham had only his servant Hilton and his cook.

But all was not yet over. She arrived just "as my petty Hoxton common was coming for my dinner" which would be about noon, and talked to him as she talked to pursuivants.

"It was past four in the afternoon when the verbal combat was decided, and I went not so late to dinner since when I was close prisoner in the Fleet, where my keeper not seldom did forget me at my meal hours, though never was unmindful to lock me up close." Anne said she was in great poverty and "unmarried, by reason she hath not her marriage money in her own custody." Tresham retorted that "it is well known that she hath preferred to live an unmarried life." Also she has her maintenance from her father ; her grandmother, not long since dead, left her great plenty of wealth, while her eldest brother dealt very bountifully with her. The day seems to have ended peacefully, and when Tresham wrote very late that night to his wife he was able to speak of "my now kind, former unkind cousin."³⁷ But three weeks later he is again writing querulously about the accusation of driving Elizabeth into a convent, and that he is "a scandal to the Catholic religion and to all Catholics and should also speedily be 'skowred' up for it by them that had authority to do it."³⁸ That is the last we hear. Unfortunately there is no record from Anne's side, of this stormy interview.

From the above it would seem that Anne's poverty was only relative. A servant later on "did hear that she had a stock of money of some five hundred pounds, and an annuity out of Leicestershire by the death of her Grandmother."³⁹ On the other hand the maintenance of these spacious houses, sometimes two or three simultaneously, would soon run away with a fortune, even though Fr. Garnet contributed, and some of the guests were paying-guests. Furthermore, there was about this time a special call upon her purse.

Father Baldwin, a noted Jesuit, had been captured at sea on a journey from Flanders to Spain in this very year, and was sent to the Tower.⁴⁰ It was a flagrant injustice, as he had had no intention of landing in England, and was there only by *force majeure*. From a chance remark in a letter of Fr. Garnet's written years afterwards, we learn that it was Eleanor and Anne who paid his ransom and bought him his release.⁴¹ There is no reason to suppose that this was their only act of charity, but perhaps it accounts for Anne's drastic importunity.

While Tresham was in the Fleet another heavy blow fell on the sorely harassed Lord Vaux. On 13 July his son and heir, George, died suddenly at Harrowden. He was under thirty and

had been married less than nine years. He left a heart-broken wife, who took four years to recover from the blow, and six young children all under eight years of age. He was buried at Harrowden on the following day.

Tresham was released about this time, and wrote to Vaux on 22 July.

"At my late being with you, my very dear beloved Lord, I did forbear to impart somewhat to you, in respect of your deafness, and divers strangers then accompanying you, which I now briefly commend to you . . . For the advancement of the fatherless and penniless my nephew George's children, it behoveth you to husband all things to the best . . . I have sought every corner of my dull brain to retrieve somewhat for their relief." He begs him to look after his health "upon which axletree this weighty burden wholly resteth." After inviting him to Rushton for two or three weeks he concludes :

"Farewell my golden, gilded Lord, in heart not in purse."⁴²

Elizabeth Vaux now took sole and supreme charge of the family. Tresham's hatred of her increased with her growing influence. He never once has a kind word for her even in her bereavement, and he often goes out of his way to insult her. Thus it was customary to add to formal letters (usually written by a servant) a postscript in the sender's own hand, containing a few lines of personal good wishes. One of his letters, of 6 January, 1593, has the following :

"P.S. Commend me to the captive lord that dare not, while the sign is in the predominating *Virago* to look upon poor Rushton. In friendliest wise remember me also to his Lady and my niece Merrill. I would there were any else there worthy the saluting."⁴³

Elizabeth's opinion of Tresham would make interesting reading, but unfortunately no letter of hers of this period has come down to us. We can only judge by the way she acted. There is no doubt that she was a masterful young woman who had completely dominated both her husband and his weak father and long-suffering mother. Before the winter of 1594, she turned them both out of Harrowden and made them live in Irthlingborough, in a far inferior house.⁴⁴ Even when "her

husband is scarce cold in his grave"⁴⁵ Tresham cannot find a kind word for her. No doubt she for her part resented his persistent interference in Vaux affairs. The friction between these two strong personalities was soon to enkindle a flame.

During 1595 Lord Vaux's health, physical and mental, continued to decline. According to Tresham, Elizabeth actually registered him as an idiot;⁴⁶ there is no record of this in the Court of Wards.

On 30 August, bowed down and broken by so many cares and afflictions, Lord Vaux died at Irthlingborough, aged sixty-one, and next day was buried in the church there. He left his children an impoverished estate and a vast ocean of debts. For his friendship with Edmund Campion and for the cause in which Campion died, he had lost his reason, and all that this world holds dear. In fourteen years the wealthy cultured patron of learning, the proud father of such promising children, had been reduced to a pathetic, poverty-stricken, weak-minded wreck. But he bequeathed to his descendants a pearl of great price, the Faith of his ancestors, and a determination to cling to it, whatever the cost.

IV

It was soon after the death of William Lord Vaux that Elizabeth, after ten years of skirmishing, opened the main attack on Sir Thomas Tresham. His account is contained in a letter of enormous length, undated but evidently written in the summer of 1599.

"The widow Vaux, who implacably hating me and mine, commenced suit against me in her son's (an infant) name in the Court of Wards, where she well knew I most disfavoured was. A truthless and detestable infamous Bill she caused to be there exhibited, for my combining with some nobleman by name, also with divers Catholics, Sir John Arundel and others of reverent worth, for cozening of the Lord Vaux of very great sums of money, and also had deceived him of all or of the greatest part of the possessions of his barony, and that namely I and my eldest son had therein gotten estates to us and to our heirs, to the utter disheriting of her son. To further her cause, she registered her husband's father, Lord

Vaux, as an idiot, thereby inferring the facility I had, by the aid of my sister, to deceive his lordship in the trust he reposed in me and others. Thus she recorded her son's grandfather (to whom she owes all her advancement) as an idiot, his grandmother a monstrous conspirator against him, myself, his uncle, an arrantest knave (and yet the child, had I not prevented some sinister designs, had never had any part of the possessions of the barony, which had gone to the widow Brooksby's children).

"A worthy work of this virtuous wise woman it will be for her son to behold, when he cometh to years of judgment. I sought in Christian course to have the matter friendly decided, but when she would not admit thereof I put in such an answer for the defence of my credit and of all the residue, honourable and worshipful, as never reply was made thereto, albeit in freeing us I recriminated them, so as that it was to their exceeding shame that they could not answer. They then turned all their suit to obtain that my answer might not remain of record, but be taken forth of the Court of Wards."⁴⁷

And taken forth it probably was, for it is not to be found there now. There are, however, the Interrogatories ministered to Tresham, and his answers, from which it is clear that among the charges brought against him, were the appropriation of the manor of Great Houghton, and the dishonest retention of £160, part of £600 received from the sale of Woodford lands. Tresham of course, denied all the charges, and claims that he certainly kept Great Houghton, but that he paid for it.

There were other charges of dishonesty touching Irthlingborough, Harpole and Billesthorpe (Notts.), and that is all we know of the suit.⁴⁸ Unpleasant though it was there was worse to come.

Tresham was again imprisoned in Ely for his recusancy in 1597, and while there received the following letter from his wife.

"Jesu Marye.

Good Tres the wake a state of hore besbeloved sestar [Lady Vaux] this barar can a dres to you, yf remedyes wyll serve no dote bothe for honesty and cyllle I make no dote bot she shal hafe thame. Wavysar and hylton [two servants] ware at London of satarda last by tymes and to moro the fotmane

shalle be wythe you at hely. God grant we ma shortely hafe you at russon; thys barer makes hast, thar fore my many harty commendacyons to you. I hand [end] the 26 of sebtember 1597 from hartalynboro [Irthlingborough] your hobedyend and loving wyfe M. Tresame."⁴⁹

Lady Vaux was carried to Oxford, evidently for treatment, and there she died on 29 December. Her body was brought back to Irthlingborough to be buried beside her husband's. This was the moment that Elizabeth chose for her main attack.

She sent three of her servants, Valentine Kellison, Cuthbert Johnson, and Thomas Warner, to seize Lady Vaux's house and property in Irthlingborough, and to discharge Joan Harrison, the caretaker. They locked up the house, and also forced their way into a barn called the Beristed barn, ejected Matthew Draughton, who was threshing the corn, locked the barn, and took away the keys.

"Elizabeth Vaux and one Philip Dobbles her servant, desiring to make out some colourable claim to the property . . . sent for Ambrose Vaux, esquire, son of the said Lady Mary, being then and yet a prisoner in the King's Bench for debt, and for whom they entered and procured bands to be entered for his return to the said prison, and whom she supposed she might [i.e. could] as well now govern for a few goods as formerly she did when she got him to relinquish the possessions of the barony of Harrowden at her request, for a small sum of money, which money after she easily got from him again as he reported.

"And by promising him, the said Ambrose, one suit of costly apparel, being parcel of the goods aforesaid, and before that bought by the said Lady Mary of one Thomas Henseman for £20 or thereabout, and which apparel the said Valentine Kellison and others had then, in and upon that riotous entry, taken away out of the said house at Irthlingborough, [she persuaded him] to make title of the said goods and corn as Administrator of the goods of the said Lady Mary, (when in truth he had no letters of Administration) averring that the said Lady Mary his mother died intestate, she being, as he affirmed, excommunicated."⁵⁰

Tresham's long letter already quoted makes this a little clearer.

"The said Ambrose, with a Catholic servant of the widow's, sought to have disabled the Lady Vaux to have made any will, in respect she stood excommunicated at the time of her death : and in self-same sort caused excommunication for recusancy to be in open court urged against me, to disable me of bringing any action, as an executor, against them, and to prevent me from obtaining the goods, which I needed to pay the Lady Vaux' poor servants' wages, and to satisfy some of her poorest creditors."⁵¹

There is no doubt that Lady Vaux made a will, but if she died excommunicate her will was invalid and therefore she died legally intestate. Also a person dying excommunicate could not be buried in consecrated ground. Tresham had been named his sister's executor and he had her will in his possession. He hurried to Irthlingborough with Thomas Mulsho and several servants, and —

"having continued all the time their abode at Irthlingborough aforesaid with the said Lady [Vaux] her household at above £5 a week charge, not knowing how to lessen the same, her corpse being by, all that time unburied by reason of their malicious dealing in publishing the said excommunication, and her servants wages being unpaid."⁵²

In the parish registers at Irthlingborough is the entry "1598 Jan 19 Maria daughter of the Lo. Vaux. 19 Jan."

The entries prior to 1603 are, as in most parishes, only copies of the original register, and have not quite the same authority. Since Lord Vaux at this time was only ten, there is some mistake, and this may refer to Mary, grandmother of Lord Vaux. There is no other Mary in the family who died about this time and there is no other entry of the burial of Lady Vaux. If this be so, then Lady Vaux's body remained unburied from 29 December till 19 January, thanks to her daughter-in-law, and her only surviving son, both of them recusants themselves.

On 12 January Tresham launched a counter-attack, broke into the barn and took possession. On the same day he made an inventory of all his sister's possessions. By a rare freak of fortune this actual document has recently found its way to

Harrowden Hall, so we are able to see in detail what all this disgraceful quarrel was over.

"Inventory of the good and chattels of the right honourable the Lady Mary Vaux, deceased, taken and made the 12th day of January, in the year of our lord God 1598 . . . and then valued and [ap]praised by Ragland Cox gent., Robert Young, William Knighton, Matthew Draughton and Edmund Gilham, yeomen, as hereafter ensueth.

My Lady's closet and Mrs. Meril's chamber, new matted	5/-
Item in the kitchen 2 little brass pots	3/4
Item in the dairy-house 15 boards	10/-
Item in the corn chamber, certain oats about 6 strike	10/-
Item in the same chamber, yarn and 2 skips	4/-
Item a cheese rack board, a skip and a hamper	5/-
Item in another little chamber, within the cornchamber a cheese rack, certain sawn quarters, a little ladder and horse gears	20/-
Item in the yard certain timber	40/-
Item in the buttery a bing and other things	40/-
Item certain freestone wrought	£5
Item certain wood there	13/4
Item in the brewhouse yard, the straw, wood and timber	13/4
Item a hen pen and a short cartbag	2/6
Item 6 turkeys	10/-
Item the coach and furniture and the coach horses	£20
Item the hay	40/-
Item 3 sows and five shoates	40/-
Item the hogs' trough, the well crib, bucket and ladder	13/-
Item the peas rick	£30
Item a car and a cart	33/4
Item a bald sorrel gelding	33/4."
The total is just over £70.	

While Tresham continued to occupy the barn, Elizabeth "contrived to have a private Session to be holden at Irthlingborough aforesaid, upon the second of March" and had bills

of indictment against Sir Thomas Tresham, Francis Tresham, Francis Petit and others, for deseising the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough from the freehold, and Edward Lord Vaux from the lease. Tresham sent his servant John Flamsted at short notice to give evidence before the jury. The jury found against Tresham, and Thomas Mulsho and others locked up the barn, committing the keys to one Richard Reeve, a tenant of Elizabeth Vaux, and at the command of William Houghton, William Hollis and Thomas Richardson appointed a keeper or watchman about the barn.

Next day a large company, headed by Ambrose Vaux attacked the barn and carried off six quarters of rye worth 20 marks, 23 quarters of barley worth £46, 12 quarters of peas worth £14 and "divers parcels of implements and other goods, viz: 2 bedsteads, one table, 2 forms, onestrike, 3 shovels, 3 pieces of timber, 2 ladders, a curb for a well, and bucket and chains, to the value of £10."

On the following day Ambrose and his men came again and took away "2 vats price £20, 6 boards price 8/—, 4 quarters of peas price £4. 16., one car price 6/8, 2 bedsteads price 6/8, and one load of pease straw price 4/—. Also half a rack of peas worth £31. 13. 4d."

On Sunday, 5 March, Ambrose came again, with others "to the number of sixty persons or thereabouts gathered out of sundry towns thereabouts with swords, piked staves, pitchforks, guns, pistols and other weapons in unlawful manner assembled, repaired to the said Beristed yard where a rick or stack of peas was, and there kept together with force and arms until it was day, and made great ourcries and shouts, and shot guns and pistols in the night by the terror of the nieghbours," and carried off the peas.

Tresham acted with great promptness and on 6 March sued Elizabeth in the Star Chamber. Unfortunately her reply is not extant. There are a few interrogatories and depositions that add nothing to the story.⁵³ Tresham, however, informs us that

"Upon my calling the widow and the residue into the Star Chamber, they laboured by mediation of Justice Owen that I should surcease the suit and accept restitution of the goods. I willingly accepted thereof, and their lawyer, Mr. Pagett,

promised that I should be presently satisfied, yet all this notwithstanding, no restitution of any pennyworth thereof is yet [mid 1599] made."⁵⁴

Amid these scenes of violence and hatred Mary Lady Vaux had been laid to rest beside her harassed husband "in the chapel of the parish church of Irthlingborough," but no monument marks the place. In her will, dated 28 September, 1597, of which Sir Thomas Tresham, her brother, was principal executor, she stresses the "great sums of money" owed by her husband and herself, much of it borrowed from friends without any security. She "instantly requires" that these debts be paid. She leaves her coach and coach-horses with their furniture to Lady Tresham, £300 to her eldest grand-daughter Mary, £200 to William her second grandson, £100 to the three younger grandchildren Henry, Joyce, and Catherine, 500 marks to her son Ambrose, who did not deserve it, and to her daughter Merill Fulshurst. There are many lesser bequests to friends and servants, including £6. 13. 4 to blind Joan.⁵⁵ Could she be Joan Harrison who was so rudely turned out by Elizabeth?

Elizabeth Vaux does not emerge from this suit in a very attractive light, but we must remember that we have only Sir Thomas Tresham's side of the case, and we must not judge her by modern standards. Also no one would deny that Tresham's hostility and insulting letters were an extreme provocation. She had only one male Vaux to support her, and he was the worthless wastrel, Ambrose. She had six little children to bring up, and she fought for them with all the furious energy of a mother-bird defending her nest.

She was at this time particularly anxious about the welfare of her eldest son, Edward Lord Vaux. He was less than seven when his father died, and became, of course, a ward in chancery, at the disposal of the Queen. This auctioning of wards was always a tragedy, but for Catholics it was a catastrophe, for whoever purchased the wardship had full control over the education and marriage of the ward as well as over his estates, and there was every likelihood that he would be brought up a Protestant.

The wardship of Edward Lord Vaux was purchased by Richard Frampton,⁵⁶ a servant of Sir Thomas Cecil,⁵⁷ apparently on

behalf of his master. Elizabeth, however, was able to purchase it for herself, doubtless at a higher price. In the Hilary Term of 1598 it was decreed :

“That Elizabeth Vaux, widow, Sir John Roper, knight and Thomas Mulsho of Thingdon [Finedon] . . . do receive the profits of the land etc. of Edward Lord Harrowden, upon bond to accompte when the Court [of Wards] thinks fit . . . that Elizabeth Vaux . . . hath to her great costs and charges purchased the wardship and marriage of the said son, and the lease of lands etc, and obtained the same, by the agreement of this court, to be conveyed to Sir John Roper, knight, her father, with an intent to discharge the said ward of the value of his marriage, if he, at his full age, do yield unto his two younger brothers and three sisters such portions and partitions for their education and advancement as shall be thought meet . . . That George Vaux their father died not being long sick, and much more in debt than his goods or chattels could satisfy, and that neither he nor William Lord Vaux had made any provision for the maintenance or education of the said younger sons or daughters, partly by reason of their great debts, and partly by reason that their manors, lands etc. were so beforehand conveyed and assured, that they could not make any assurance or provision for them.”⁵⁸

Elizabeth was soon to meet a man, who, if he could not tame her, could divert her militancy into more worthy channels. Within a few months of her last great fight with Tresham she had curbed her proud spirit, her excessive mourning, and her self-will, by the time-honoured vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and laid her life and her fortune at the feet of Father John Gerard, Jesuit.

V

There was yet another quarrel between Tresham and the Vaux family, and it was in some ways the saddest of all. Merrill Vaux, youngest daughter of William Lord Vaux, had, in 1597, reached the great age of twenty-seven and was still unmarried, living with her mother at Irthlingborough. Tresham, with whom she had been a favourite, was busy fixing up a marriage for her with

a Mr. Lovell, which, in Tresham's eyes was a "worshipful match," he having plenty of money. A formal contract was drawn up, and then Merill requited Tresham "with monstrous malice" by choosing her own husband. That was bad enough, but what made it so galling to Tresham was that she eloped with one of his servants, George Fulshurst, or Fulcis as Tresham always calls him, and they married in Tresham's own house. Tresham was furious with this "witless casting herself away on a hand-lopper, a very beggar and bankroot base fellow, and shamelessly abandoning so worshipful a match as Mr. Lovell." Fulcis "being my servant and well knowing of the said contract, should seek by shameful and sinful means to offer me that villainy; and where to solemnize that their scandalous inter-marriage but secretly in my house, thereby raising an outcry that I was a confederate, and meant to share her marriage portion with that arrant varlet of mine. Further, when I had paid them over £1,200 of her marriage money, they declared they had not had a penny, and had I not fortun'd to get hold of Fulcis' account books, I might have had to pay it over again, as he was both receiver and disburs'er, and other proof I had little or none."

In 1599 when, they had run through £1,200, they sued Tresham for a sum of £750 which he was holding back "in case Fulcis should die or abandon her and marry another wife." Tresham refused to pay and was sent to the Fleet.⁵⁹

He had spent close on twenty years in durance and many in actual confinement, but this last imprisonment filled his cup of bitterness to the brim. To suffer for the Faith, his "beloved Rachel," brought its own consolation, and he always shows an amazing patience and resignation. But to lie in the Fleet all through the summer in "this unhealthful prison, and in this contagious, hot, and most dangerous season of the year, having but one little chamber of fifteen foot long and twelve broad, and no place for any servant of mine to lie here within this prison to attend me,"⁶⁰ at the hands of his own Catholic niece and a former trusted servant, was a humiliation without any consolation.

"I have lived," he bewails, "twenty years in adversity among my fellows in many imprisonments; also oft-times at liberty forth of prison though at meanest liberty of all my fellow

recusants. I am flesh and blood as other men. I came to prison in the flourishing time of my years (35 years of age) and in the prime time of my credit both in city, county and court . . . All the time of my imprisonment none (my brother the Lord Vaux excepted) of greater calling than myself, and sometimes none in this nation of my degree committed but myself."⁶¹

There is a strange sheet of paper he has left us that is very revealing. On 29 October, 1599, he was whiling away the weary hours of prison life playing his favourite game of mystical numbers. This consisted of writing down a large number of texts from the Latin Vulgate, putting over each word the number of letters contained therein, and then, by rules known only to himself, looking for combinations that would produce perfect squares or significant dates. He had filled half a large sheet in this way when he was interrupted. Beneath his weird mystic arithmetic he has written the following :

"Memorandum. This present Monday the 29th of October 1599 hither came to my chamber in the Fleet my nephew Ambrose Vaux, accompanied with Mr. James Appary a prisoner here also, with a keeper of my said nephew that belongs to the King's Bench. His request was for an annuity of £40 made him by his father the Lord Vaux . . . I told him that long since I remembered that his father granted him an annuity of £40 but it was so defective that I rejected it, and whether I have it or disposed it unto the court of wards I remember not, but if upon search I can find it he shall have it. Further he said that this annuity of £40 which he demanded was annihilated and made void by reason of a fine he the said Ambrose levied . . . I required Mr. Vaux to remember that he (Ambrose Vaux) made demand of a void annuity and made void by his own act, as himself testifieth. This immediately upon their departure hence I did set this down in writing to my better remembrance. T. Tresame"

Then under this, in the same sort of script that he uses for his biblical texts, he has written :

Amb Vaux

29 oct 1599

evidently with a view to considering its mystical possibilities.⁶²

In the spring of 1600 Tresham capitulated and paid his debt. He left prison for what was to prove the last time. But the bitter humiliation of it took long to heal. Fulcis and his wife "had declared in open court that Sir Thomas Tresham showed the fruits of his religion towards his niece by unjustly detaining her money and electing rather to lie in prison than to pay it," and Egerton, the Lord Keeper, said with equal publicity "that Sir Thomas Tresham was a bad man in every way and deserved no favour in that court."⁶³

This was the last straw. A great friendship, traditional for centuries, had been severed by the death of Lord Vaux, and now the last remaining ties that bound Rushton and Harrowden were dissolved. Francis Tresham was to remain on friendly terms with Henry Vaux's sisters, but Sir Thomas washed his hands of Harrowden, and never makes any further allusion to the Vaux family.

CHAPTER VI

THE RAMPING LION

I

FR. GERARD wrote two accounts of his labours in England, one in Latin and the other in English. The English book was "A Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot." It was intended as a defence of the Jesuits and of himself in particular, and since it was written for immediate publication, it carefully abstained from statements that might bring his friends into trouble. There are passages that are designed to mislead the pursuivant and to cover up his tracks. There are also some inaccuracies as he was not an eye-witness of all that he relates, and moreover was writing abroad. The other work was an Autobiography written in 1609, at the command of his superiors, and with no idea of publication. Although even here, with that caution which the times required and which had perhaps become second nature, Fr. Gerard is sparing in proper names, he nevertheless gives enough detail to enable most of his friends to be identified. Where it is possible to check his narrative by other documents he is shown to be so accurate, especially as regards times and sequences of events, as to suggest—unlikely though it be—that he kept a diary. The narrative is by far the most vivid and charming contemporary picture of the penal times.

There are several extant descriptions of his person. In 1606 he was officially described as follows :

"John Gerard *alias* Brooke, of stature tall, and according thereunto well set : his complexion swart or blackish ; his face large ; his checks sticking out, and somewhat hollow underneath the cheeks ; the hair of his head long, if it be not cut off ; his beard cut close, saving little mustachioes, and a little tuft under his lower lip ; about forty years old."¹

Topcliffe who knew him in the intimacy of the torture chamber has also depicted him, probably soon after his escape from the Tower. I leave Topcliffe's own "kewryoos" spelling :

"Jhon Gerrarde, ye Jhezewt is about 30 years olde of a good stature sumwhat higher then Sr Tho Layton & upright in his payse and countenance, sumwhat stayring in his look or Eyes, Currilde heire by Nature & blackyshe & not apt to have much heire of his bearde. I thincke his noase sumwhat wide and turninge Upp Blubarde Lipps turninge outwards Especially the over Lipps most Uppwards toward the Noase Kewryoos in speetche he flourrethe & smyles much & a falteringe or Lispinge or dooblinge of his Tonge in his speeche."²

Topcliffe is perhaps unconsciously describing what Fr. Gerard looked like as he hung by his hands in the Tower.

Such was the priest who in 1598, within a year of his escape from the Tower, was sent as chaplain to the young widow, Elizabeth Vaux, and her six small children.

Fr. Gerard tells us that there had been a Jesuit chaplain at Harrowden for a year before his arrival. By a process of elimination he has been identified as Fr. Richard Cowling,³ son of a shoemaker of York who died for his Faith in York jail.⁴ Fr. Cowling came to England in 1596.⁵ On Gerard's arrival at Harrowden, he was sent to Mr. Edward Bentley, who had one house in Derbyshire, and another at Little Oakley (Northants.), of which more anon. There is a letter signed "Richard Callinge" and dated "This St. John's Eve" [23 June,] but giving no year. It apparently belonged to a packet of intercepted letters, some of which are dated 1599. It has a postscript:

"Let Dr. Kellison [then a professor at Douai] know that his brother Valentine is in good health and a wellwiller but no Catholic."⁶

As Valentine Kellison was a servant at Harrowden, it seems certain that Fr. Cowling is the chaplain who preceded Gerard there. From this letter we learn also that Cowling was first cousin of Guy Fawkes, on whose behalf he writes.

We will now let Fr. Gerard speak for himself, interrupting the narrative as little as possible.⁷

"I visited a noble family, by whom I had long been invited and often expected, but I had never yet been able to visit them on account of my pressing occupations. Here I found

the lady of the house, a widow, very pious and devout, but at this present overwhelmed with grief at the loss of her husband. She had indeed been so affected by this loss that for a whole year she scarce stirred out of her chamber, and for the next three years that had intervened before my visit, had never brought herself to go to that part of the mansion in which her husband died. To this grief and trouble were added certain anxieties about the bringing up of her son, who was yet a child under his mother's care [Edward Vaux, born September 13, 1588]. He was one of the first barons of the realm; but his parents had suffered so much for the faith, and had mortgaged so much of their property to meet the constant exactions of an heretical government, that the remaining income was scarcely sufficient for their proper maintenance. But a wise woman builds up a house and is proved in it.

"I found residing with this family one of our Fathers, a learned man and a good preacher: he had been a year in the house, but some of the household were prejudiced against him. The mistress, however, always showed him the utmost reverence, and was assiduous in approaching the Sacraments. On my arrival this good widow seemed to see her wishes fulfilled, and not only welcomed me most charitably, but appeared so changed from grief to joy, that some of her household represented to me that if I would come there oftener, still more if I could reside there permanently, they were assured she would lay aside that long-continued grief, and that both she herself and her affairs would soon be in a better condition. This I think they had from the mistress herself."

Fr. Gerard got permission to accept the offer, and begged to have as his companion Fr. John Percy, S.J., though it was a full year before Fr. Percy could be spared. The second priest had also had his baptism of fire. He had been taken prisoner in Holland on his way to England about 1596 by some English soldiers, who hung him up by his hands and tortured him by twisting a cord round his head. He was carried prisoner to London, but after seven months of rigorous confinement he contrived to escape.

"When I was domiciled in my new residence, I began by degrees to wean my hostess' mind from that excessive grief:

showing how that we ought to mourn moderately only over our dead, and not to grieve like those who have no hope. I added that as her husband had become a Catholic before his death, one little prayer would be him more good than many tears . . . I then taught her the use of meditation, finding her quite capable of profiting by it, for her mental powers were of a very high order. I thus gradually brought her to change that old style of grief for a more worthy one . . .

“In the first place therefore she resolved to lead an unmarried life ; secondly to aim at poverty in this sense, that all her actual fortune, and all that she might ever have, should be devoted to the service of God and his ministers, while she herself should be but their servant to provide them with what was necessary : lastly she gave herself above all to obedience, and determined to reduce her love of it to practice no less perfectly than if she had taken a vow ; nay, it was her only trouble that it was forbidden to priests of our Society to receive vows . . . Consequently she was ready to set up her residence wherever I judged it best for our purposes, whether at London, or in the most remote part of the island, as she often protested to me. I considered, however, that though a residence in or near London would be better for the gaining of souls, yet that it was not at present safe for me ; nor indeed could she remain there in private, since she was well known for a Catholic, and the Lords of the Council demanded from her frequent accounts of her son, the baron, where and how he was educated. Moreover, as she had the management of her son’s estate while he was a minor, stewards and bailiffs and other such persons must have constant communication with her ; so that it was quite out of the question her living near London under an assumed name ; yet this was absolutely necessary if a person wished to carry on the good work in that neighbourhood. It was thus those ladies did with whom Father Garnet lived so long, who were in fact sisters of this lady’s deceased husband, one unmarried, the other a widow [Anne Vaux and Eleanor Brooksby.]

“I saw therefore no fitter place for her to fix her residence than where she was among her own people ; where she had the chief people of the county connected with her and her son, either by blood or friendship.

"The only difficulty which remained was about the exact spot. The house in which she was actually living [Irthlingborough] was not only old, but antiquated. It had been the residence of her father-in-law, whose wife was a better hand at spending than at gathering, and consequently the house was very poorly appointed for a family of their dignity. There was another and a larger house of theirs at a distance of about three miles, which had been the old family seat [Harrowden]. This had also been neglected, so that it was in some part quite ruinous, and not fit for our purpose, namely to receive the Catholic gentry who might come to visit me. In addition to this it was not well adopted for defence against any sudden intrusion of the heretics, and consequently we should not be able to be as free there as my hostess wished. Her desire was to have a house where we might as nearly as possible conform ourselves to the manner of life followed in our colleges : and this in the end she brought about.

"She sought everywhere for such a house, and we looked at many in the county, but something or other was always wanting to her wishes. At last we found a house which had been built by the late Chancellor of England, who had died childless and was now to be let for a term of years."

The Chancellor referred to was Sir Christopher Hatton who died 21 November, 1591. He was succeeded by his nephew, Sir William Newport, who assumed the name Hatton. He died 12 March, 1597, leaving his property to his wife Elizabeth Hatton. The house referred to is Kirby Hall near Deene. From the indentures still extant⁸ we learn that Elizabeth Hatton leased Kirby to John Wiseman of Bozeat on 27 March, 1598 ; that he leased it to Henry Montague of Boughton House on 24 March, 1599, and only a week later, on 1 April, Henry Montague leased it to Thomas Mulsho and Francis Crispe. Thomas Mulsho of Finedon was one of the trustees for the young Lord Vaux, and he is here probably acting on behalf of Elizabeth Vaux, who would naturally not rent a house in her own name, when she had such a dangerous object in view.

"It was truly a princely place, large and well-built, surrounded by gardens and orchards, and so far removed from other houses that no one could notice our coming in or going out

This house she took on payment of fifteen thousand florins (£1,500), and began to fit it up for our accommodation. She wished to finish the alterations before we removed thither ; but man proposes and God disposes . . .

“When I came to this lady’s house, she had a great number of servants, some heretics, others indeed Catholics, but allowing themselves too much liberty : some I made Catholics of, others through public and private exhortations became by the grace of God more fervent ; in some cases where there did not appear any hope of amendment, I procured their dismissal, and among these was he who had chiefly opposed the former priest of whom I spoke. There was another also whom we could not correct as soon as we wished, and who brought great trouble on us.”

The servant spoke incautiously or maliciously and before long it was common knowledge that John Gerard dwelt at his mistress’ house.

“The Council, now knowing my residence in the country, issued a commission to some justices of the peace in that county to search this lady’s house [Kirby Hall] for a priest. It had in fact begun to be talked of in the county that she had taken this grand house in order that she might harbour priests there in large numbers and with greater freedom, because it was more private ; and in this, people were not far wrong.

“Now at this time, that is, soon after my return from London [about July, 1599], we had driven over to the new house to make arrangements for our removal thither, and with the special object of determining where to construct hiding-places. To this end we had Little John with us, whom I have before mentioned as very clever at constructing these places, and whom Father Garnet had lent to us for a time for this purpose. Having made all the necessary arrangements, we left Little John behind, and Hugh Sheldon also to help him, who is now at Rome with Father Persons in the room of John Lilly. These two, whom we had always found most faithful, were to construct the hiding-places, and to be the only ones beside ourselves to know anything about them. The rest of us however returned the same day to our hostess’ old house [Irthlingborough] and by the advice of one of the

servants, God so disposing it, we came back a different way, as being easier for the carriage. Had we returned by the way we went, the searchers would have come early to the house where we were [Irthlingborough], and most probably catching us entirely unprepared would have found what they came to seek. The fact was that the road by which we went to the new house ran through a town [Kettering], where some of the enemy were on the watch and had seen us pass: but not seeing us return, they concluded that we were spending the night at the new house, and went there the first thing in the morning to search.

“But the house was so large, that although they had a numerous body of followers, they were not able to surround it entirely, nor to watch all the outlets so narrowly, but what Little John managed to make off safely. Hugh Sheldon they caught, but could get nothing out of him so they sent him afterwards to prison at Wisbech, and from thence later to some other prison in company with many priests, and at last [1603] in the same good company into exile.

“When however the justices found that they were wrong, and that the lady had returned home the previous day, they retraced their steps and came as fast as their horses could carry them to the old house. They arrived at our dinner-hour, and being admitted by the carelessness of the porter, got into the hall before we had any warning. Now as the lady of the house was a little indisposed that morning we were going to take our dinner in my room, viz. Father Percy, myself and Master Roger Lee . . . So when I heard who had come, that they were in the great hall, and that his lordship himself, who was indeed but a boy [aged 10] at the time, could not prevent them from intruding into his room, though he was also unwell, I made a pretty shrewd guess what they had come about, and snatching up such things as wanted hiding I made the best of my way to the hiding-place, together with Father Percy and Master Roger Lee . . . But we had to pass by the door of the room in which the enemy were as yet waiting, and exclaiming that they would wait no longer. Nay, one of the pursuivants opened the door and looked out; and some of the servants said afterwards that he must have seen me as I passed. But God certainly interposed; for it was surely not to be expected

from natural causes that men who had come eager to search the house at once, and were loudly declaring they would do so, should stay in a room where they were not locked in, just as long as was necessary for us to hide ourselves, and then come forth as if they had been let loose, intrude upon the lady of the house, and course through all the rooms like bloodhounds after their prey . . .

"The authorities searched the house thoroughly the whole day, but found nothing. At last they retired disappointed, and wrote to the Council what they had done. We soon discovered who had done the mischief (for he had not done it secretly) and discharged him, but without unkindness. I gave out also that I should quit the place altogether, and for a time we practised particular caution in all points.

"In consequence of this mishap it became impossible for us to remove to the new house. For those same justices who were pestilent heretics, and several others in the same county, Puritans, declared they would never suffer her ladyship to live in peace if she came there, as her only object was to harbour priests.

"Being deterred therefore from that place, but not from her design, she set about fitting up her present residence [Harrowden] for the same purpose, and built us separate quarters close to the old chapel, which had been erected anciently by former barons of the family to hear Mass in when the weather might make it unpleasant to go to the parish church. Here then she built a little wing of three storeys for Father Percy and me. The place was exceedingly convenient, and so free from observation that from our rooms we could step out into the private garden, and thence through spacious walks into the fields, where we could mount our horses and ride whither we would."

The new wing was perhaps the present north wing, where a hiding-hole still remains. The main part of the house has been rebuilt. This is probably one of the very few occasions when Nicholas Owen was able to design his hiding-holes as part of the original plan of a building. Generally he had laboriously, alone, and at night, to hack his way into existing walls.

Thus at the dawn of a new century, with the persecution still

raging, Elizabeth Vaux founds a Jesuit College in the heart of England. It was much more than a refuge for one or two priests. It was a centre of operations. It also served an essential purpose in educating Catholic boys before they were old enough to be smuggled to Douai. We know the names of three boys who were educated with the young Baron. John Mulsho, son of Thomas Mulsho of Finedon spent five years here before he went beyond the seas and became a priest and a Jesuit.⁹ John Swetnam, who also became a Jesuit, was son of Elizabeth Vaux's baker.¹⁰ The third was Father Henry Killinghall, who was not a local boy, so presumably a "boarder."¹¹ He was born in York jail, where his mother was imprisoned for her faith. As Lord Vaux was a ward in Chancery, Elizabeth had to notify the Council of how her son was being educated. It was politic to employ a Protestant tutor, and an Oxford graduate named Thomas Smith held the post for a time. But he was so edified by the little boys getting up for midnight Mass one Christmas that he became a Catholic and in due course a Jesuit.¹² Another was appointed named Tutfield, who also did not escape infection, for he was afterwards tutor to Lord Mordaunt's children at Drayton, when he was described as a dangerous papist.¹³

"We had", says Fr. Gerard, "good store of useful books, which were kept in a library without any concealment, because they had the appearance of belonging to the young baron, and of having been left him by his Uncle [Henry] who was a very learned and studious nobleman, and was well known for his piety. He had in fact resigned the right and title of the barony to his younger brother, the father of the present lord, in order that he might more entirely and securely devote himself to God and his studies."

There was one room that never allowed to reflect the straightened circumstances of the family.

"Our vestments and altar furniture were both plentiful and costly. We had two sets for each colour which the Church uses; one for ordinary use, the other for feast days: some of these latter were embroidered with gold and pearls, and figured by well-skilled hands. We had six massive silver candlesticks on the altar, besides those at the sides for the

elevation. [Extra candles were then lit for the most solemn part of the Mass.] The cruets were of silver also, as were the basin for the *lavabo*, the bell and the thurible. There were moreover lamps hanging from silver chains, and a silver crucifix on the altar. For greater festivals however I had a crucifix of gold, a foot in height, on the top of which was represented a pelican, while on the right arm of the cross was an eagle, with expanded wings carrying on its back its young ones, who were attempting to fly : on the left arm a phoenix expiring in flames that it might leave an offspring after it ; and at the foot was a hen with her chickens, gathering them under her wings. All this was made of wrought gold by a celebrated artist.

"I had there also a costly ornament representing the Holy Name of Jesus, which my hostess had given me the first Christmas after I came to live in her house. The Name was formed of pins of solid gold, and the glory surrounding it had two pins in one ray and three in the next alternately. The whole was about twice the size of a sheet of this paper, and contained two hundred and forty of these gold pins, each pin having a large pearl attached—not indeed perfectly shaped pearls, for in that case the value would have been something fabulous, yet as it was, the whole ornament, pins and pearls and all, was worth about a thousand florins. There was also at the bottom of it a sort of cypher wrought in gold and gems by the artist, something in the shape of a capital letter, expressing the donor's name, and in the middle of the cypher was a heart, and from this heart there issued a cross of diamonds. This ornament was given me by the devout widow on New Year's Day [1599], in honour of the most Holy Names of Jesus, commemorated on that feast. All these ornaments are still [1609] kept there in trust for the Society ; and in the meantime serve for the use of that domestic church and the residence of our fathers."¹⁴

II

Leaving Father Percy to hold the fort, Fr. Gerard spent much of his time in visiting the local gentry, converting them or their wives to the Catholic faith, and setting up Mass centres in their

houses. One of the first whom he thus visited was Sir Everard Digby.

Digby's father seems to have been a Catholic, but Everard was left a ward in chancery and apparently brought up a Protestant. His brother John, however, who owned the manor of Seaton (Rutland) was undoubtedly a Catholic as early as 1585, when he was a prisoner for religion in the Tower.¹⁵ Everard married a rich heiress Mary Mulsho, who brought him the great house of Gothurst or Gayhurst (Bucks.) two miles from Newport Pagnell and some fifteen from Harrowden. It was a youthful match, as was then the custom: he was sixteen and she only about fifteen, when they married in 1596. Their elder son was the famous Kenelm Digby the courtier, who was born in 1603. Fr. Gerard's visit was before the birth of any children. He posed as a sporting country gentleman. This role suited him admirably as he had an exact knowledge of sporting terms that even then differentiated the true hunting-man from the ruck of mankind. He gradually won the confidence of both Sir Everard and his wife, and converted each without the other's knowledge. So complete was his disguise that Sir Everard at one time thought him a suitable match for his sister. This sister eventually became a nun.

Digby was one of the handsomest men of his time, "above two yards high" and a worthy match for Fr. Gerard. Between these two men there ripened a friendship stronger than death: they called each other "brother" and were constantly together. Digby would often look in at Harrowden, as he passed between his two estates at Gothurst and Stoke Dry (Rutland).

Fr. Gerard also visited Robert Catesby at Ashby St. Legers, whom he describes as "very wild" in his youth. His father, Sir William Catesby, we have already met in the Star Chamber. There was no need to convert Robert, though his morals may have required some attention. He was not, thought Gerard, as good as his ancestors had been.

"Some of his ancestors had borne great sway in England. But commonly the greatest men are not the best. Some others have been of great esteem for virtue, as namely one knight of his house (I take it some four or five descents ago) was commonly known in all the country 'good Sir William Catesby,' of whom this memorable thing is recorded; that

when he had lived long in the fear of God and works of charity, one time as he was walking in the fields, his good Angel appeared and showed him the anatomy of a dead man and willed him to prepare him, for he should die by such a time. The good knight presently accepting of the message willingly, recommended himself with a fervent prayer unto our Blessed Lady in that place and then went home and settled all his business both towards God and the world, and died at his time appointed. This story is painted upon a wall in the church of Ashby, where that knight and other of Mr. Catesby's ancestors lie buried. Myself have both seen the pictures and read the prayer in that place."¹⁶

In 1923, under the whitewash of three centuries, some of the wall paintings that Father Gerard saw were rediscovered.

Another house that must be mentioned is Thame Park near Oxford, the home of Sir Richard Wenman. Sir Richard's wife was Agnes daughter of Sir George Fermor, of Easton Neston (Northants.): she was distantly related to the Vaux family as her grandmother was Maud, daughter of Nicholas Lord Vaux. "Her husband," says Fr. Gerard, "was a knight of very large property, who hoped to be created a baron, and still hopes for it." He had to wait till 1628, when he became Baron and Viscount Wenman.

On one occasion when Fr. Gerard was playing cards with Lady Wenman, who should call but Dr. George Abbot, dean of Winton and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. He had recently published a bitter attack on Fr. Robert Southwell, who had been martyred, and on Fr. Gerard himself, for defending equivocation.

After the usual civilities the worthy dean, quite unconscious of Gerard's identity, indulged in "much frivolous talk." But ere long the conversation veered dangerously round to theology, when Dr. Abbot, who had strong Puritan views, told of a certain Puritan in London "who had thrown himself down from the steeple of a church, having left it in writing that he knew himself to be secure of his eternal salvation." This was a very loose ball and Fr. Gerard hit it over the boundary. "Gentlemen," said the Doctor, changing the subject, "must not dispute on theological matters."

"The lady with whom I was playing, hearing him speak to me in this way, could scarce keep her countenance, thinking within herself what he would have said if he had known whom it was he was answering. The Doctor, however, did not stay much longer. Whether he departed sooner than he at first intended, I know not; but I know that we much preferred his room to his company."¹⁷

Whether the Puritan doctor frowned at the cards we are not informed, but Fr. Gerard feels it necessary to explain

"That when I played thus with Catholics, with the view of maintaining among a mixed company the character in which I appeared, I always agreed that each one should have his money back afterwards, but should say an *Ave Maria* for each piece that was returned to him. It was on these terms that I frequently played with my brother Digby and other Catholics, where it appeared necessary, so that the bystanders thought we were playing for money, and were in hot earnest over it."

We shall meet again with both Dr. Abbot and Lady Wenman, in less amusing circumstances.

Though Fr. Gerard does not mention it, we know from another source, that he visited Dingley. William Atkinson, a priest who had been a prisoner with Fr. Gerard in the Clink, and had since apostatised, wrote to Cecil about 1602 :

"It is credibly reported that Mr. John Gerard, Fisher [John Percy] and Litstar [Fr. Lister, S.J.] are to be at a hunting in Beskwood Park, for not long since they were with Mrs. Griffin of Dingley, and there they determined to go to the Lady Markham, Sir Griffin Markham's wife, and likewise Francis Tresham, young Vaux and Mr. Griffin's son and heir was to accompany them."¹⁸

Beskwood or Bestwood Park (Notts.) was a royal demesne where the Queen had a hunting-lodge. Sir Griffin Markham (whose mother was Mary Griffin of Dingley) had succeeded his father as keeper there in 1600.¹⁹ He had married Anne, daughter of Peter Roos of Laxton (Notts.). It was Peter Roos who was responsible for Ambrose Vaux's first long imprisonment for debt. Sir Griffin and his wife were Catholics and friends of

Father Gerard, but what sort of Catholics and what sort of friends the sequel will show.

Edward Griffin, of Dingley and Braybrook, had been accused of harbouring Campion. His house at Dingley was built, as an inscription over the porch still tells us—"Anno 1558 in the Rayne of Felep and Marye." There are other inscriptions, some in Latin with a glorious disregard of grammar. "After darkness cometh Light" may perhaps be a Catholic view of the reign of Philip and Mary. "Go contented with thy lot" added in 1560, suggests that the light had failed. In this same year Griffin caused to be inscribed, with optimism quite unjustified: GOD SAVE THE KING 1560. When Fr. Gerard visited the house this inscription was forty-two years old and still dangerously premature.

"Young Vaux" is of course Edward, now fourteen, and the presence of Francis Tresham, eldest son of Sir Thomas, shows that the friendship between these two families, despite Sir Thomas' disapproval of Elizabeth Vaux, was still continuing.

Francis Tresham was not however an ideal companion for the young baron. Like Everard Digby he was wild in his youth and never a very satisfactory son. On 1 June, 1591, an hour before sunrise he had come with thirteen horsemen and two footmen, with bars and crows of iron, and broken into the house of one George Ball, who owed Sir Thomas Tresham £400. They rifled his house, breaking open chests, and taking both money and all the evidences and writings therein. "And with swords in their hands they entered Ball's chamber (he being seventy years old), laid violent hands on him and his daughter, and threw her (then great with child and near her time) down the stairs; after which, by a pretended warrant they carried Ball off a prisoner to Rushton Hall and kept him there twelve weeks.²⁰ Francis, and George Fulsis, his father's servant, (who married Merill Vaux,) were imprisoned for this in the Fleet and Marshalsea respectively.²¹ There is also an undated letter from which we learn that Francis tried to persuade George Levens, Sir Thomas' trusted servant, to falsify his accounts.²² In February, 1601, he became embroiled in the Essex rebellion and was imprisoned in the Gatehouse. This crazy rising nearly cost him his head, and cost his father the huge fine of £2,000, as well as another £1,000 in "presents."²³

Catholics of the older generation had learnt the hopelessness of open resistance to a well-organized dictatorship. The terrible suppression of the Northern Rebellion had not been forgotten especially in the north. But the younger generation had no such memories and unbounded confidence in their own prowess. They had been born and bred in a state of outlawry. They had never known freedom of worship, and the wealthy ones had watched their incomes steadily waning. They were bitter and reckless. There was no member of the Vaux family alive who could remember Catholic days. Tresham, who belonged to the old school, was only fourteen when public Mass was officially abolished. He was now over sixty, and through half a century had been condemned to practise his religion in secret and even at the risk of his life. Yet he had remained loyal to the Queen, and was opposed to all forms of intrigue and violence. But he could not instill the like patience into his eldest son, any more than old Lord Vaux could manage his daughter-in-law.

III

The last years of Tudor rule passed rather more quietly. There were sporadic and quite hopeless plots against the tyranny, but most Catholics deemed it wiser to wait for the death of the Queen. They were not to know what a long weary wait it was to be, and that she was destined to live to a greater age than any previous English sovereign. At all events these years passed uneventfully at Harrowden, and as far as we know, the house was never once molested by pursuivants. This may have been due in part to the long-standing friendship between the Vaux family and their neighbours. But it was also due to the hopelessness of finding a priest in the vast, rambling mansion, which Nicholas Owen had so well equipped with hiding-holes.

We get an unsolicited testimonial to his work, and incidentally to the quality of the priests' horses, in a report sent to Sir Robert Cecil by Henry Knowles on 12 February, 1601. He had traced a fugitive papist from Warwickshire to Harrowden.

"I was of mind to have shewed your warrant to Sir Edward Montague and to have craved his assistance for the search of the house ; but I am thus certainly informed that if I could see him [the fugitive] go in and presently [be]set the house,

there be such places for concealing him, as except a man pull down the house he shall never find him. And besides, there is great doubt to be had that Sir Edward Montague will not (upon a bare warrant, except there were a letter written unto him that might declare some matter of import depending upon the man) use the matter so strictly and circumspectly as is fit. I therefore, before any more stir be made in the matter, do beseech you to write to Sir Edward Montague; and withal to help me with such a horse as may if need be overlay him in the field, and then I will assure you that upon Ash Wednesday [Feb. 25] next or between this and that I will have him."²⁴

Most students of Northamptonshire history are aware of the great fight, against the totalitarian control of the press, put up by Sir Richard Knightley and his Puritan friends. The secret and illegal printing press that turned out the famous Martin Mar-Prelate tracts was hidden in 1588 in his house at Fawsley and later in his other house at Norton. In this matter they were fighting for the same freedom of speech as the papists, and, whatever their other differences, each must have felt a secret sympathy with the other's courageous flouting of the law. How courageous this was is shown by the dead set the government made against illicit printers and book-sellers. Several suffered death for printing Catholic books, and many others were treated with more than usual barbarity. As early as 1577, Roland Jenks, a Catholic bookseller of Oxford was condemned "to have his ears nailed to the pillory, and to deliver himself by cutting them off with his own hands."²⁵ Stubbes, the Puritan author, and Paget the publisher of what was judged a "seditious libel" were sentenced to lose their right hands and to be imprisoned for life. Camden who was present says: "Their right hands were cut off with a cleaver, driven through their wrist with the force of a beetle." Stubbes wrote a letter to Christopher Hatton testifying his loyalty to the Queen. "Notwithstanding the bitter pain and doleful loss of my hand immediately before chopped off, I was able, by God's mercy, to say with heart and tongue, before I left the block these words, 'God save the Queen.'"²⁶ It is not therefore surprising that these presses were run with the utmost secrecy. There was certainly a popish one in Northamptonshire.

A spy named William Wood wrote to Sir Robert Cecil on 26 April, 1600 :

"By the contents of the chapters of the first leaf, your honour shall see the most railing pamphlet against religion that ever was set forth. Wright is the author of it, and it is printed here [i.e. in England]."²⁷

On 3 May he sends a little more information :

"I do understand, both by him that sent me the railing pamphlet set out by Wright and by others, that they were printed in Northamptonshire, where there is more like stuff on the press. The printer is one Henry Oven [Owen]. He is known in this town [London], for being a prisoner in the Clink, he was by my Lord's grace removed to the White Lion whence he escaped. The corrector of the print is one Wills that is now in this town. . . . These railing pamphlets are marvellously dispersed."²⁸

The pamphlet in question is probably *Certaine Articles or forcible Reasons discovering the palpable absurdities & most notorious errors of the Protestant religion*. . . . Printed at Antwerp 1600. The copy in the British Museum²⁹ is foreign printing, but there is at Lambeth³⁰ a copy of a different edition, of the same year, which may be the one here referred to.

As Henry Owen was the brother of Nicholas Owen,³¹ and as Father Wright was a Jesuit, it is quite likely that the secret press was at Harrowden.

Besides books thus printed underground there were many printed abroad and smuggled into England at great risk. The ordinary distributing centres were the prisons where so many Catholics languished for years. These books were lacking neither in quality nor in quantity. There is a list³² of such books delivered to various London prisons in 1587 which shows how well the papists conducted their book-trade. Besides the inevitable missal and breviary there are primers both great and little, singing books, a Latin-French dictionary, books in French and Latin, and various manuals. "Tho Aquinus" was delivered to Mr. Pim in Newgate, and 150 *Jesus Psalters* went to the Marshalsea. Fr. Person's *Christian Directory*, here called the *Resolution* was a best seller, with over 350 copies. Some of these books were bound in parchment, one *Resolution* had leather strings, one

book was "with clasps" while there were five presentation copies of another, in gilt, for the principal recusant ladies. They were Lady Vaux, Lady Tresham, Mrs. Tregian, Mrs. Pansford and Mrs. Langford. The principal distributor was a Catholic schoolmaster Richard Webster who was committed to prison in 1573 and was still there in 1602.³³

Another illicit trade that was carried on in the heart of Northamptonshire was the making of rosaries. So at least I understand the following spy's report of 3 February, 1595.

"At Little Ogle [Oakley], eight miles distance from Rowell [Rothwell] in Northamptonshire, lieth Mr. Bentley, who hath a priest in his house continually, and commonly a seminary priest, whom his wife calleth her chicken.

"The said Bentley hath an old man named Greene, a carpenter and mason, who maketh all the beads that lie in little boxes. He made a secret place in Mr. Bentley's house at Lea [Derby] with a door of free stone that no man could ever judge there were any such place, and he made all the secret places in recusants' houses in that country."³⁴

The rest of this long report concerns Derbyshire. Lord Keeper Puckering was so impressed by it that he sent his arch-pursuivant Newell to investigate. Newell began his tour in Derbyshire. He called at the house of Mr. Jenison, whose wife was Fr. Gerard's sister. He found plenty of popish pictures on the walls, but no sign of a priest. Thence to Mr. Merry's house at Barton Park and drew blank again. Indeed Mrs. Merry told him "that she heard of his outing the night before." She was sister to Mr. Palmer of Kegworth (Leics.), so he went next to Kegworth. Again no luck. Then he came to Northamptonshire. The report sent to Sir John Puckering by Edward Watson of Rockingham gives a good picture of what every Catholic house had to be prepared for. It is dated 20 June, 1595.

"The bearer hereof, Mr. Newhall, one of the messengers of her majesty's chamber acquainted me with a warrant directed from your lordship . . . for the search of Jesuits, seminaries, Massing priests, Mass books and other superstitious things thereunto appertaining, with whom I went early this

morning to a house in Little Oakley, wherein Mr. Bentley, his wife and family now inhabit, to search for one [space] Chicken.

“And upon our present coming thither the doors were shut upon us, the gentleman himself found in his garden at his book by Mr. Newhall, who very carefully and diligently behaved himself in this service. And after we made show to break into the house, the doors were opened by the maids, and passing the hall and the parlour, desirous to go into the gentlewoman’s chamber, we found her in bed. And after some search in desks, trunks, and coffer, we found a chalice, and Mr. Newhall going near the bed found about the same a little coffer which at first she refused to open, but afterwards, her husband secretly telling him that massing stuff was therein, delivered the key to Mr. Newhall, willing him to keep it secret from me : who carried the same to the town of Kettering and in my presence there opened it. Wherein there was another chalice of silver, a crucifix of jet, a surplice, a Mass book, and divers other vain things belonging thereto.

“There were no men in the house we saw at our first coming in but himself. He said he had a man called Thomas Coste who was gone to Kettering market. We searched his study also, where there is a great many books, and because the time was too short to take view of them, I did, by the messenger’s direction, lock up the door and sealed the same with my own seal, meaning to keep the key thereof until I hear further of your lordship’s pleasure therein.

“Mr. Bentley being unprovided presently to travel, he, by the messenger’s direction, acknowledged a recognizance to me to her majesty’s use of a thousand pounds to be at Kettering with his man, at the sign of the Swan there, at 6 of the clock the next morning, and they two as prisoners to go from thence with Mr. Newhall to your right honourable good lordship . . . and in meantime to continue true prisoners.

“But Chicken we could not find. Nevertheless upon enquiry made by the messenger at Kettering he was informed by Francis Cater a yeoman of her majesty’s harthounds, that a man by that name had frequented the house of Mr. Bentley, and, as he heard, he was there about Easter last, after whom (as in duty bound) I mean to make enquiry. The rest I

reserve to the report of the bearer hereof . . . Kettering the 20th of June 1595."³⁵

This must have put an end to one of the county's least known industries.

IV

In 1600 Fr. Garnet and his community moved to a house called White Webbs on Enfield Chase. The name still survives and the park is now open to the public. The present house, however, is not only new, but built on a different site. The original house was just inside the park gates, conveniently near the King and Tinker, which still preserves a porch that was probably there in 1600. According to local legend King James called incognito at this inn, while out hunting, and met a tinker who wanted to see the King. How the tinker rode pillion behind the King, all unsuspecting, how he discovered who his fellow-rider was, and how he was, of course, knighted on the field, is told in a ballad which I fear is not a contemporary document, and in any case does not concern us here. Local legend also remembers Fr. Garnet and the two sisters, though they take second place to the tinker.

White Webbs was rented from a Dr. Hewick. "It was", says Fr. Garnet, "a spacious house fit to receive so great a company that should resort to him thither, there being two beds placed in a chamber, but thinketh there have not been above the number of 14 Jesuits at one time there, and saith that the house was taken in the name of Mr. Measy which he confesseth was but a feigned name to the intent to prevent the indicting of Mrs. Anne Vaux who was called by the name of Mrs. Perkins, and Mrs. Brooksby who lived privately there. And the charges of housekeeping being great were borne by this examine and them in common."³⁶

The house was entrusted to the care of a faithful servant who called himself James Johnson. Johnson arrived about Candlemas 1600, and the stuff to furnish the house was brought from London by one Lewis, a carrier dwelling in Enfield town. The legal business was done by one Robert Skinner. Mrs. Perkins arrived some three months later, "and one of the first guests that came to her was one Mr. Mese, an ancient well sett gentleman,

but playne in Aparell, wch was eyther fustian or stuffe."³⁷ No doubt the rest of the community soon moved in, but there is no further mention of the old woman who died in 1601.³⁸ Large rooms were divided by partitions, and doubtless Little John was busy with less obvious alterations.

There is no record of the "Paschal meeting" this year, but it must have been soon after Easter that Fr. Benstead, *alias* Hunt arrived. He was a secular priest who had just escaped from what we should now call a concentration camp at Wisbech, and came to Fr. Garnet for shelter. Garnet sent him into Lincolnshire about the beginning of May, but he was recaptured and martyred at Lincoln on the 11 June of this year.³⁹

Before the end of the year the house was receiving priests in large numbers. Garnet writes to Persons on 25 November:

"Besides Cornford now received I have had eight more with me this day for renovation [of vows]. I cannot keep them away, but they will flock to such feasts: all are much comforted."⁴⁰

There was one permanent addition to the household, for about this time Eleanor's son, William Brookesby, married Dorothy Wiseman, daughter of William Wiseman of Braddox. In due course there were the further additions of two baby daughters. One of these children was later fathered on Fr. Garnet. Eleanor's daughter, Mary, married Richard Thimelby of Irnham, Lincolnshire and had fourteen children.

In 1602 Queen Elizabeth was now failing, and the succession was still unsettled. Cecil was negotiating with James VI of Scotland, and Garnet with the King of Spain. Both these activities were technically treasonable, but Cecil's was successful and is considered rather clever, whereas Garnet's failed and is branded as a dastardly conspiracy. Moreoever Cecil worked with such secrecy that not a hint of his dealings with Scotland came to light till two hundred years after his death. Garnet's were known to the Government all along and soon received the widest publicity.

It is difficult for us to realize that in 1603 Scotland, though many of its inhabitants spoke a language that faintly resembled English, was as much a foreign country as Spain, and every bit as hostile to England. The English Catholics were divided on

the question of the Queen's successor. There was a party, to which Tresham belonged, that favoured the son of Mary Queen of Scots, and there was a party, to which most of the Jesuits belonged, that looked to Spain. It was, perhaps, Tresham's strong anti-Spanish views that made a Jesuit, Fr. Tichborne, write of him in 1598:

"And here, by the way, I must advise you that Sir T. Tresham as a friend of the state is holden among us [Jesuits] for an atheist."⁴¹

This letter was intercepted by the government. It is to be hoped that Tresham was never shown it. It would have broken his heart.

Pope Clement VIII had issued two Breves concerning the succession, and Garnet had received copies of them. The earlier, dated 5 July, 1600, was addressed to the Catholic laity and exhorted them to join no party and to support no claimant manifestly alien from the Catholic faith. The second, dated 12 July, 1600, and addressed to the Nuncio in Flanders, ordered him, as soon as he hears that "the miserable woman" is dead, to write to the English laity, ordering them in the Pope's name to stand firm and to work for a Catholic King, who will "give to Us and to Our Successors true obedience."⁴² The distinction between keeping a Protestant successor out, and throwing him out or even blowing him out, was not appreciated by Robert Catesby.

About the middle of March there were rumours that the Queen was dead, "and all the better and religious sort of people were much amazed, and feared greatly the days were now to come they wished never to live to see. The papists and loose kind of people they set their flags aloft and looked merrily, and feared nothing but that it was too good to be true."⁴³

At last the great day came. Queen Elizabeth died on the morning of 24 March, 1603, the last day of the year as then computed.

Catesby came to White Webbs the same day with the news of her death and of the succession, without any opposition, of James VI of Scotland. The Breves were now useless and Garnet promptly burnt them.⁴⁴

Sir Thomas Tresham was at Luton and got the news at five in the afternoon, with instructions from the Lords in the Council to proclaim King James I. How his loyal heart must have

rejoiced. Was not the new King son of Mary Queen of Scots? He could not possibly keep up the persecution against those who had suffered so much for supporting his mother's claims. But could the news be true? He had heard rumours some days before that the Queen was dead, and they had turned out to be false. To proclaim the new King while the Queen still lived would be high treason.

The Puritans were apprehensive. Tresham was beset by a party of eight men, put there by a pursuivant to watch the door of the inn where he was staying, and to prevent him proclaiming the King. He escaped, however, and rode post-haste to Dunstable, where he could obtain fresh horses. From Dunstable he rode, all through a very dark and rainy night, up the Watling Street to Stony Stratford, and then forked right, through Yardley Gobion to Northampton. The great Lady Day Fair at Northampton had been cancelled and the town was in a tumult all night. As Sir Thomas rode thither he passed great companies of men coming away, and to all and sundry he proclaimed King James. He reached the suburbs between eight and nine on the Friday morning, the Feast of the Annunciation, "exceedingly moyled and soyled."

The south gate of the town was shut and guarded by partisans and halbardiers. He stopped at the house of Sir George Fermor just outside the gate. His post-boy blew his horn and Lady Fermor appeared. Sir Thomas alighted and saluted her, and with some difficulty obtained access to her husband, then sick of the gout. Gradually a party of his kinsmen and countrymen rallied round him, and he rode on to the gate of the town.

"He got off his horse and so approached to the gate, and there publicly proclaimed the King, whereat was no applause of the guarders of that gate, or of the standers by."

He told the crowd "that he had further matter of very serious importance to impart to them and which he well knew would greatly glad them, all which they should hear delivered them by their Mayor" and by this ruse tried to get entrance into the town. But his difficulties were not yet over.

"The warder refused to let him pass in unless he would alight from his horse, and go on foot to the Mayor.

"Sir T. T. asked of them how lately that ceremony was grown up in Northampton and whether they would have their Mayor accounted for an idol, that none might have access to him but on foot. And further told them that as he well knew the inhabitants of that town did not allow pilgrimage, so would not he acknowledge the Mayor for an idol, and so pressed on the warders to have passed in at the gate.

"Therewith being denied by them all, one stepped forwarder than the residue of the warders, and did bend his partisan on Sir T. shaking the same at him, and swearing a terrible oath, menaced Sir T. for not so entering a horseback into the town. But Sir T. maintaining his attempt pressed in with his horse among the halbardiers and dared any of them to withstand him in that service of the King."

At length he and his servants were barbarously conducted to the Mayor's house, where the post boy again blew his horn, and the barbarous multitude cried: "Down with them, all three."

There was a crowd of over five hundred people, all very hostile. After considerable parleying Tresham gained access to the Mayor, Edward Mercer. With the Mayor were Sir Robert Spencer and many other gentlemen: also a "factious fellow" named Cattelyne, Vicar of All Saints, who started an argument about the Pope.

Tresham proclaimed the King to them. "Let us pray God to prosper him." The Vicar ("the same spleenish and peevish party") answered "Let us pray that the King prove sound in religion." Tresham thought this "distasteful and untimed." Sir Robert Spencer was all for delay. There our document⁴⁵ ends abruptly. Probably Sir Thomas himself proclaimed the King, and then he rode off to do the same at Kettering, taking advantage of the crowds that flocked there for the Friday market.

We know nothing of how the news reached Harrowden. We can only surmise that Elizabeth and her family sighed with relief. The strangling hand was removed from their throats. They were blissfully ignorant of the disappointment in store for them, that drove so many of their friends to plot to blow the King back to Scotland. For the moment the Catholics rejoiced.

Edward Griffin could at last survey his inscriptions, without an uneasy feeling that they were hopelessly out of date. "God save the King" and "After darkness cometh light."

CHAPTER VII

POWDER TREASON

I

EVEN before his accession King James is said to have given a verbal promise to Thomas Percy, the future conspirator, that the Catholics would be granted some degree of liberty. The Earl of Northumberland deposed (23 November, 1605) that

“When Percy came out of Scotland from the King (his lordship having written to the King, where his advice was to give good hopes to the Catholics, that he might the more easily, without impediment, come to the crown) . . . he said that the King’s pleasure was that his lordship should give the Catholics hope that they should be well dealt withal, or to that effect.”¹

There is, in the very nature of things, no written evidence of this promise, and the King later denied having given it, but the Catholics firmly believed that some assurance of toleration had been given.

From a rare tract, printed at Douai in November, 1604, entitled *A Petition Apologetical, presented to the King’s most excellent Majesty by the Lay Catholics of England in July last*, we learn (c.l.) that Cecil granted an interview to Sir Thomas Tresham, in which he assured him that the King would make good all his promises, made before his accession. Soon after the King’s arrival, in April, 1603, the Catholics addressed to him a *Supplication for toleration of Catholic religion*.² Tresham’s hand may be detected in this as well as in the much longer *Petition Apologetical*, of which a manuscript and a printed copy are among his papers.³

In reply to the *Supplication* Tresham and a number of other lay Catholics were summoned, by royal command, to Hampton Court in July, 1603. They were received with every courtesy, and were informed that it was the King’s intention “henceforth to exonerate” them from the fine of £20 a month for recusancy, “so long as they kept themselves upright in all civil and true

carriage towards his majesty and the state." Tresham objected that "recusancy alone might be held for an act of contempt" but was assured "that his majesty would not account recusancy for contempt, and desired them to communicate the King's gracious intentions to their brethren."⁴ The result of this conference was that Tresham and fifteen others were exonerated from paying the fine, by warrant dated 23 July, 1604, which warrant was renewed on 27 November.⁵

But while these negotiations were actually in process, a stupid plot was revealed to the government. It was concocted by an eccentric priest named William Watson and involved a small number of Catholics including Sir Griffin Markham and Bartholomew Brooksby, Eleanor's uncle by marriage. Their object was not to murder the King, but merely to kidnap him and force him to dismiss his ministers and appoint Catholics or at least men favourable to Catholics. The only part of the plot that they seem to have planned with any thoroughness was the reconstitution of the Privy Council and other offices of the Crown. Sir Griffin Markham was to become Earl Marshal, his eldest brother Captain of the Guard; Mr. Anthony Copley (another conspirator) to be Secretary, Mr. George Brook, Lord Treasurer, and Fr. William Watson himself chose, of course, the office of Lord Keeper. Having satisfied their own needs the conspirators found they had a few plums left over, and decided, among other appointments, that the office of Lieutenant of the Tower should go to Sir Thomas Tresham.⁶

The association of Tresham's name with these light-hearted half-wits could not but prejudice his delicate negotiations with the King. His own comment in this conspiracy is characteristic of him :

"If any such menstruous or rather monstrous filthiness hath proceeded from any challenging himself or themselves for a Catholic or Catholics of England, let him or them be anathema among us. For *talem consuetudinem* (such a custom) we detest. And that for my part do so detest and abhor that not only I wish them chastised above the lewdness of their miscreant intendments, and that far above treacherousest Puritan or Anabaptist whosoever, in like predicament of malignity and monstrosity. Yea I protest, and before God do protest it,

that rather than such caitiffs should escape for want of an executioner, I would supply the 'burreau' his office, which otherwise no worldly gain should hire me unto . . .

"Nevertheless I have so long time been experimented in the cursed 'Machivelian' projects visored in former times on us in ugliest wise, that I partly . . . do suspect: *Latet anguis in herba* [A snake lies hidden in the grass], an atheistical Anthony Babington's complotment. Truth is the daughter of time."⁷

Tresham was wrong in thinking that this was a government plot foisted on the Catholics, but it is interesting to see what he thought of the Babington Plot. Watson's crazy conspiracy was revealed to the authorities by Fr. Garnet, and by Fr. Blackwell, the superior of the secular clergy. Watson and two others were executed; Sir Griffin Markham was sentenced to death but reprieved and in August, 1605, sent into banishment.

By the beginning of 1604 all hope of toleration for papists was gone. On 19 February, the King protested "his utter detestation of their superstitious religion, and that he was so far from favouring it, as if he thought his son and heir after him would give any toleration thereunto, he would wish him fairly buried before his eyes."⁸ And fairly buried he was in 1612.

On 22 February, 1604, a proclamation was issued ordering all Jesuits and Seminary priests to depart the kingdom before 19 March. The Watson plot was made the excuse. On the same day the fine of £20 a month for recusancy was again put in force, and was made to include the whole period since the King's coming, thus negating what little relief had been granted.⁹

On 24 April, a bill was introduced in the lower house, classing Catholics with forgers, perjurers and outlaws, and disabling them from sitting in parliament, while an "Act for the due execution of the statutes against Jesuits, seminary priests and recusants" made in this session, not only re-enforced all the laws made in Elizabeth's reign but even added to their severity. Any attempt to receive a Catholic education abroad rendered the culprit incapable of inheriting property, while a tutor who presumed to teach without licence from the bishop, or in the house of a recusant should pay, as well as his employer, forty shillings for every day during which he so continued to offend. On the third

reading of this bill Viscount Montague courageously denounced it, and the following day found himself in the Fleet for his "scandalous and offensive speech."¹⁰ Further proclamations followed and on 16 July the bloody persecution broke out again when John Sugar, a priest; and Robert Grissold his servant were executed at Warwick. They were followed in August by two laymen, Lawrence Bailey and one Rawson, executed at Lancaster. Thomas Pound, who had been a friend of Campion, and had languished in prison a quarter of a century, was arraigned before the Star Chamber for protesting against the cruelty of the law and the execution of Bailey and Rawson. He was now old and senile, but was sentenced to lose one ear in London and the other in Lancaster and to continue in prison for life, as well as to pay a fine of £1,000. The mutilation was later commuted to standing in the pillory one day in each town, with ears nailed but not cut off.¹¹

There were signs also of the bitter disappointment and desperation of the Catholics. A minor revolt broke out in Herefordshire in the summer, and there were rumours that the papists were collecting armour, lethal weapons and horses. There was some slight foundation for these rumours, at least as regards the horses, but like all rumours they soon became exaggerated. Thus an obscure person in Northampton, one Godley by name, spread the story that the Catholics were preparing a sudden coup that was to be a sort of cross between the massacres of St. Bartholomew's Day and the Destroying Angel. All Protestant houses were to be marked with the Sign of the Cross in preparation for the purge. Godley was arrested, and all the evidence that he vouchsafed was that

"Sir Thomas Tresham was seen with others, no small babes and eighty in his company, to come in the night to Boughton, within two miles of Northampton, and wherefor should that be? This he vouched from Edward Martin who was sent for and said indeed that he had heard so, and that there were two hundred in the company, but not that they came in the night: and heard another time that there were two thousand, and since he heard that there were but six."¹²

In the spring of 1605 Tresham was in trouble of another sort. After twenty-four years of adversity he was reinstated by James I

to the extent of being made a commissioner for forest causes. A fortnight after Easter, which fell on 31 March, he arrived at Brigstock to determine certain matters concerning the bailiwick of Kingscliffe. The other commissioners were Lord Mordaunt and Sir Edward Watson, but the latter did not turn up. As there was not a quorum Tresham decided to improve the shining hour by reading the jury and others an historical lecture, that was neither impartial nor tactful, nor, we need hardly add, was it terse.

“He thought good at that time (a very great company being then there) to give them a light of that service. And thereupon fell into a very long discourse which held (as this examinant taketh it) two hours at the least, and that was so long as this examinant was driven out to go forth to ease himself of his weariness in standing. And at his returning he heard Sir Thomas Tresham say that King Edward was but young and of tender years, and withall to this effect, that he was something deformed, and so was unable to look into the defect of the forest, and therefore in his time the defect began. And as for Queen Mary, she was a most godly, virtuous, christian, and religious prince, endowed with many singular qualities, and one that had a care to do good in the commonweal, yet by reason of treasons against her and her many troubles, she was not able to do that good in the commonweal which she intended (she living but a short time), or to that effect.

“And as for Queen Elizabeth, he said she was but a woman, and one that was spurblind, and therefore took not great pleasure in hunting, not being able well to ride ahunting or to shoot in her bow, for that she was a woman and spurblind as aforesaid, and therefore did not look into the state of the forests.

“And touching the King’s Majesty that now is, this examinant thought he spake very plainly as to this effect: and for King James he was but lately come in, and had small time to look into forest causes, but hoped that now he would look further into them, and to the reformation of abuses.

“And said also in his discourse, he had been kept from the fate of his country, and had not been in any commission these twenty-four years, but now it had pleased his Majesty to appoint him a commissioner for these causes.

"He then said also it was his son's hap, with his nephew Catesby, to fall into that unfortunate action of the late Earl of Essex, which cost him £2000 for a fine, for which he set over some part of his lands to the late queen. He said he was thought to have dealt hardly with his tenants, and yet he never took above £5 for a yard land the first fine, and £10 the second, and never enclosed their lands. But since (being given away by the late queen) the patentees they have enclosed and improved it to a great value, and yet the tenants live richly on it, saying the country yet thought hardly of him for enclosing but a little parcel. And then he showed what a house he had always kept amongst them, having spent some half-hundred beeves in a year, two hundred muttons, and allowed his wife forty kine for her dairy towards her house-keeping, which yet would not serve her turn. And this notwithstanding he was driven to contribute to the poor in several towns about him to the value of £10 by the year.

"He then said also that for the assert grounds Mr. Nicholson was not ashamed to vouch a lie before the barons of the Exchequer, saying the King meant to deal hardly with them, which now they see the King means not to do; and used many vain discourses, at some of which he is assured many good men did mislike, and muttered among themselves, but especially in that he passed over renowned sovereigns with no more respect than he did."¹³

This evidence was corroborated by another witness, Robert Ross, who says that Tresham

"entered into a long discourse in his own commendation for his housekeeping, and for relief of the poor, and said that some part of the country was like a country overrun; towns and houses were in great ruin, nothing to be seen but the walls, and the people left without habitations . . . He spent at least two hours in these his discourses, insomuch as some sixteen of the company (being together at a dinner with this examinant) they fell into talks thereof and grew great discontentment therewith. And he did not perceive that anyone of the whole company gave any liking or allowance unto his speeches. He saith also he hath heard there was much more speeches used

by the said Sir Thomas Tresham at Thrapston than was in this place."¹⁴

In a later examination these witnesses jointly agreed that he spoke "with very great reverence towards Queen Mary and with as small reverence either towards the late Queen Elizabeth or the now King's Majesty as could be."¹⁵

This was a serious matter, and the witnesses were examined by the Lord Chief Justice in person on 19 July. The upshot was that in this same month, on the advice of Levinus Munck, Salisbury's Secretary, Tresham resigned his office.¹⁶ It must have been at this time that he rented his house at Hoxton to Lord Monteagle. The only letter that mentions it is undated,¹⁷ but there is a letter of Tresham's dated 23 June,¹⁸ which shows that he was still at Hoxton then. It was at this house that a mysterious letter was soon to be delivered to Lord Monteagle, a letter which simple-minded people have always believed gave away the Gunpowder Plot.

In 1605 the penal laws were being enforced with great rigour in the north of England. Two more laymen were executed in the summer. One of them William Brown, servant to Thomas Darcy of Hawton, was born in Northamptonshire.¹⁹ He suffered at Ripon on 5 September. Not unnaturally there was considerable unrest among the disappointed Catholics who had waited so long and with such hopes for the new reign. We need look no further than to Fr. Garnet's letters. On 29 August, 1604, he writes: "Catholics will no more be quiet. What shall we do? Jesuits cannot hinder it. Let Pope forbid all Catholics to stir."²⁰ On 8 May, 1605, he wrote to Fr. Persons:

"All are desperate here; divers Catholics are offended with Jesuits: they say that Jesuits do impugn and hinder all forcible enterprises. I dare not inform myself of their affairs because of the prohibition of Father General for meddling in such affairs."²¹

On the same day he wrote to the Jesuit General²² in precisely similar terms, but in Latin, and received a letter from him, dated 25 July, 1605, which may or may not be an answer to his:

"We have heard, though with the utmost secrecy, what I am persuaded your lordship knows, that the Catholics are

planning something for liberty; but as such an attempt, especially at this time, will bring not only many grave inconveniences to religion, but will call into question the whole body of Catholics, Our Holy Father orders me to write to your Reverence in his name that you should use all your influence with these noblemen and gentlemen, especially with the Archpriest, that nothing of the sort should be discussed or carried out on account of the above mentioned causes."²³

It must not be supposed that the Earl of Salisbury was entirely unaware of the trouble brewing. Though he was careful never to give any hint in England that he had any foreknowledge, he wrote to his ambassadors abroad on 9 November, 1605, after describing the plot:

"Not but that I had sufficient advertisements that most of those that now are fled (being all notorious Recusants), with many others of that kind, had a practice in hand for some stir this Parliament, but I never dreamed it should have been in such nature, because I never read nor heard the like in any State to be attempted in gross by any conspiracy without some distinction of persons."²⁴

The problem remains how and when he got his first intimation of the plot. There is not a single spy's report among his papers or the State papers that clearly refers to the subject. But there is an interesting document among the Flanders State Papers²⁵ that seems to have been overlooked. It is very long—eleven closely written pages—and cannot be given in full. Nor is there any need. It is headed: "The manner of my first arrival and entertainment at Brussels the 21 of April, 1605." From internal evidence it is clear that the writer was a soldier, who tells us he has served fourteen years in Ireland, France and the Low Countries, and has a brother serving with Count Maurice of Nassau and the Dutch Protestants. It bears the very distinctive signature of William Turner. Turner was one of Salisbury's spies in the Low Countries. As early as 1598 he sent "The names of those Jesuitters that are in the Netherlands in the entertainment of the King of Spain," a long, accurate account of the exiles, showing a considerable acquaintance with Catholic affairs.²⁶ On 26 April, 1604, he received a safe conduct to come to England²⁷

and on 22 March, 1606, Salisbury himself signs a pass for him to repair to England "on the King's service."²⁸ There are other reports from him in 1606,²⁹ and his name occurs several times in letters from William Newce (another spy) who was obviously jealous of him.³⁰

Writing from Flanders Turner relates at length how he met a certain Mr. Redish, and one Colonel Simple, both popish exiles serving the Archduke of Austria. They recommended him to get in touch with Fr. Baldwin the Jesuit Superior in Brussels, and with Hugh Owen, a Catholic layman, "for they were the Spanish Secretary's instruments in matters of the nation," He met Owen walking with a Mr. Bayly. Owen "looked on me scornfully," and said that he could get no employment there unless he became a Catholic, as the King of Spain wanted only Catholics.

Three days later he met Owen at Court, and "he said he understood I had a brother served the States, and asked if I could persuade my brother to come over to the Archduke's side, and withal to render some town of importance." Turner was sent to Holland with a hundred pounds. "At my arrival there I told Count Maurice the cause of my coming thither, for which I received thanks and rewards at his hands, and returned to the other side, informing them of such things as I thought could best please their humours."

He gives no indication of how long this mission took: he merely states that a few days after his return "Owen sent for Greenway and Fawkes and made me to be acquainted with them, assuring me they were very honest men and such as he loved dearly, and purposed hereafter to employ me with them. . . . After this Owen sent me with Fawkes to the army, to make relation to the Marquis [of Spinola] what I had done in Holland." Seven weeks later Owen sent for him and they had a long conversation about a plot to invade England. Turner says he was reconciled to the Church by Fr. Baldwin "and next morning received of him the Sacrament." The same evening he went to Owen, who carefully locked the door, and unfolded the details of the plot. The spearhead was to be a company of 1500 Spaniards who were actually at Dover at the time (this was in July, 1605), awaiting passage to Flanders. They were to be reinforced by the volunteer regiment fighting with the Archduke, and by some 300 horse

"which he was assured would be ready to join them" in England. They were to drive from Dover to Rochester, capture the bridge there, and immobilise the English Fleet that was riding at anchor there. Five hundred musketeers and some small pieces of artillery were to be carried in pinnaces, which were in readiness at Dunkirk, Nieuport, Gravelines, and Ostend. There is a great deal about the details of this invasion, and Turner's role had been already determined :

"First he told me that I should be presently furnished with money convenient to defray my charges from hence to London, but that I should stay at Dover for Greenway, who was gone by the way of Douay, whither he carried from Brussels many packets of writings and books. At his coming to Dover he should take me in his company, and bring me to Mr. Catesby, who as Owen said expected my assistance in such things as they appointed to employ me, straitly commanding me to do all things he should require at my hands for the advancement of the service, but above all to be secret, by which means I should get many honourable friends of the nobility and others who would have arms and horses in readiness."

Turner informs us that he kept Sir Thomas Edmunds, our Ambassador at Brussels, *au fait* with these proceedings, and presumably the information was passed on to Salisbury. But the only extant letter of Edmunds concerning Turner was not sent till 27 September, 1605. It speaks of Turner's "light and dissolute life," and his desire to recover Salisbury's good opinion of him, and it gives a long account of his treachery in Holland. It makes no reference to the coming invasion, but Edmunds states that he is sending Captain James, who can be trusted and who will tell him more.³¹

In October, Turner went to Paris, and presented Sir Thomas Parry, our Ambassador there with "divers papers of intelligences and practices of sundry his Majesty's disaffected subjects as well on this side of the sea as at home," but this was not reported to Salisbury till 28 November, too late to help in the discovery of the Plot.³² The ambassador also sent a copy of Turner's instructions from Owen :

"You shall repair from your landing place to London, to

Mons. Hobock, the Ambassador resident for the Archduke, and there to deliver the letters you have in charge, and withall to enquire for one Dr. Taylor, who shall give you such order as he hath received from here. You shall have a care that you have no conference with the Earl of Salisbury, the King's principal Secretary of State, or any person whatsoever, unless it be with those that are to be treated with."³³

Turner's own statement contains no reference to the blowing up of Parliament, and it is probable that he knew nothing about it. He wrote himself to Salisbury on 5 December, referring to his former letters, and expressing his desire to merit the King's pardon, and to return to England. "If I might have had it I should have made known the grounds of many accidents that have now fallen out to be true. The ground of this treason [i.e. the Powder Plot] was unknown to me : God is my judge . . . Many other things of importance I have related to the Ambassador long before these treasons were known to you . . . I told the Ambassador before of many of them that are in these treasons. I have sent you instructions that Owen and Baldwin have given me to put in execution, with many other directions most detestable and damnable . . . I came with tears to Edmunds, and told him I would fain speak with you to make known the same."³⁴

It is not possible to say when Salisbury received Turner's statement. If Turner wrote it after the discovery of the Powder Plot he shows remarkable restraint in making no reference to it. But even supposing that the actual document was among those sent by Sir Thomas Parry just after the Plot, the information in it belongs to the previous summer and was in the hands of Edmunds some months before the Plot was discovered. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Salisbury was aware that something was on foot, and that he was furnished with the names of Fawkes and Catesby before the end of the summer. With his excellent secret service it should not have taken him long to discover that these gentlemen were taking liberties with the foundations of the Parliament House.

The traditional story of the Gunpowder Plot is so bristling with difficulties that some writers have maintained that it was a Government fabrication from the start, cleverly foisted on the Catholics. There are, however, grave objections to this theory

which should be frankly faced. There is, for instance, the account in the Brudenell collection of the death of Francis Tresham in the Tower, written by William Vavisor his servant, who was with him when he died. This document has never been in the hands of the Government and is above suspicion. Tresham told Vavisor how on 14 October, 1605, Catesby and Thomas Winter came to him at Lord Stourton's house in Clerkenwell, and after supper called him into his bedchamber, and having extracted a promise of secrecy, "entered presently into matters of treason, and said they intended to blow up the Parliament House with gunpowder."³⁵

There was certainly a good deal of forgery, and tampering with genuine documents, but this can be accounted for without denying the existence of the Plot. Salisbury was determined to exploit his advantage to the utmost, and to use the Plot for the ruin of the English Catholics at home and abroad. His efforts to inculcate Hugh Owen is a good example of his methods. This exile was agent for English affairs at the Court of the Archduke, and obnoxious to the English government, and every device was used to compass his extradition. Owen was arrested and his papers were searched, but there was no *prima facie* case against him, and the Archduke resisted the pressure even of King James himself, to send Owen to stand his trial, and be hanged with the rest. In order to convince the Archduke of Owen's guilt a copy of Fawkes' confession was sent to him, in which Fawkes is made to say :

"I retired into the Low Countries *by the advice and direction of the rest, as well to acquaint Owen with the particulars of the plot, as also* lest by my longer stay I might have grown suspicious."

The words in italics do not occur in the original, and were dishonestly interpolated for obvious reasons.³⁶

There is a somewhat similar passage about Owen in the declaration of Garnet dated 8 March, 1606 :

"He [Greenway] affirmed to me to be privy to that action eight, Catesby, Thomas Winter, Percy, Faux (*who he told me went over at Easter to acquaint Owen, which I never imagined before nor thought any such resolution to be in Faux*), the two Wrights

I think he named but not Bates nor Robert Winter nor Grant nor Sir Everard Digby."³⁷

The words in italics fit so unnaturally into the context that they sound suspiciously like a later addition. They are also rather nonsensical. When Fawkes left England at Easter, Garnet had no inkling of the Plot. Why should he go to the trouble to protest that he then had no suspicions of Fawkes' true reasons for leaving England?

But if this passage is an interpolation, then the whole of the declaration of Garnet, "all in his own hand" must be a forgery, for the words form an integral part of the declaration, and are not added afterwards. An endorsement to the effect that a document is all in the hand of the alleged writer only seems to be found on documents that are highly suspicious.

To make the Plot appear as heinous as possible it was stressed that the object was to blow up the King and the royal family. But when the conspirators began their work they had no reason to suppose that the King would be there. Parliament had not been dissolved but only prorogued, and it was never the custom for the sovereign to open a new session. King James was, of course, not there on the 5th, and when he did come, on the afternoon of the 9th, he told the House that he came "contrary to the custom of any of his predecessors, at the beginning of any session of Parliament holden by prorogation."³⁸ He was not given to attending Parliament; he much preferred hunting. He had been present only three times in the previous two and a half years. The conspirators had no reason to think that he would oblige them by being there, and by bringing the whole royal family with him at the very time when the mine went up. The spectacle of Guy Fawkes, with tinder and flint, awaiting the psychological moment is picturesque but not convincing.

Much capital was made out of the absence of certain Catholic peers when Parliament assembled on 5 November. Peers were not bound to sit, but if they were not coming they had to appoint a proxy. One might have expected that any Catholic peer who had been warned to stay away would have taken the elementary precaution of appointing a proxy. But whether he appointed one or not, he would not have been conspicuous by his absence. There were ten bishops and forty peers absent on the 5th, and

only twenty-nine had appointed proxies. Salisbury himself was not there, and this was not a last-minute decision, as he had appointed Lord Gray as his proxy. Gray was not there. The most suspect of all the Catholic peers, the Earl of Northumberland, was among the few who did attend, but it was only the Catholic peers who got into trouble for staying away.

There are indications that the Government was expecting some plot, and preparing for a possible coup. As early as 11 June, 1605, the Bishop of Ely was asked "whether he be willing that the priests shall be sent to Wisbech Castle, to be there at the King's charges without any burthen to him, and if he be, then to appoint some fit person to look after them." The Bishop evidently considered this a profitable proposition, for on 23 June he appointed his own brother, Mr. Heton, and on 27 June the Sheriffs were instructed to send priests there.³⁹ A similar emptying of the London prisons took place just before the Government chose to "discover" the Babington Plot.

Another indication of official foreknowledge is the behaviour of the sheriffs. They were all due to relinquish their office on the very 5 November, but in fact they all stayed on till the following January. They must have received instructions to do so some time before the discovery of the Plot.

It seems certain then that Salisbury had a genuine plot to exploit and ample time to prepare. How well he exploited it is common knowledge. Anyone who has the patience to read steadily through the two folio volumes of miscellaneous manuscripts known as the "Gunpowder Plot Book" will find that there is scarcely any reference to gunpowder, and not much more about the plot. Most of the documents are concerned with papists and Masses. Salisbury's determination to embroil as many priests as possible and Jesuits in particular could hardly be more obvious.

The Gunpowder Plot was almost a family affair. Most of the conspirators were related. Most of them came from midland counties, and Northamptonshire was well represented. Catesby and Tresham were natives. Digby's house at Stoke Dry was very near the county boundary. Keyes served Lord Mordant at Drayton, where his wife, Margaret Pickering of Titchmarsh, was governess. The plot was hatched, says tradition, at Ashby St. Legers, and in the triangular lodge at Rushton, not to mention

the room over the porch of the church at Stoke Dry! Guy Fawkes certainly conferred with the other conspirators within the county, but it was not at any of the traditional places. Matthew Young of Daventry deposed on 12 November, 1605 :

“About a month ago there came to the house of the said Mr. Young in Daventry, dwelling at the sign of the Bell there, keeping an inn there, one Guy Fawkes and John Bate his boy, and came in and asked for a chamber there and there had a chamber and lay there all night, and did provide meat for half a dozen more gentlemen that would come thither to supper to him. And within an hour after coming in one Mr. Thomas Winter of Huddington in the county of Worcester and his man, and one Thomas Bate of Legers Ashby in the county of Northampton. And presently afterwards there came in one Christopher Wright, a Yorkshireman, and there continued until supper-time, and then supped together. And the said Bate did desire the said Mr. Young to help him to a messenger to carry a letter to Warwick, and so he did. Which messenger were one William Rogers . . . and before seven o'clock the next morning the said messenger were returned and brought with him one Mr. John Wright and there in the garden of the said Mr. Young, the said Thomas Winter and John Wright did walk then, and did read a letter, and there continued for the space of half an hour or thereabouts, but what they did and what conference they had together this examine knoweth not. And when they had done they came into the chamber of the said Thomas Winter and broke their fast together, and then went their way.”

On the same page is the examination of Robert Warren, servant to Ambrose Rockwood. He describes how on Monday, 4 November Thomas Bates came into his mistress' yard and put a sack in her coach, which Warren was instructed to drive to Ashby St. Legers, where Bates took the sack out again at his own door. He does not say that it contained gunpowder. Next morning, the fatal 5th, Warren drove the coach to Rushton “for Sir Henry Brown's child and another of Mr. Catesby's, and brought them to Ashby Legers and left them with my Lady Catesby.”⁴⁰

With these preliminary observations we return to the story.

II

There is a letter of Fr. Garnet's written on 21 November, 1604, that reflects the greater freedom for which he, in his simplicity, was beginning to hope.

"Today, being the feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, there happened to be here [White Webbs] together by good fortune, John [Gerard], Blunt, Percy, Hungerford, Cornforth (these three last renewed their vows) and Batley and Taten and two priests etc. High Mass was sung."⁴¹

But by Easter of 1605 they suspected that White Webbs had been discovered, and thought it prudent not to spend more than a few days at a time there. They therefore hired the manor house of Erith (Kent) on the banks of the Thames. Catesby was responsible for the arrangements and Mr. Churchill, Clerk of the Liveries in the Court of Wards, allowed his name to be used in the deeds. Here they lived in security and without any great secrecy. James Stanley of Cornhill remembered later

"that he hath heard among the neighbours to the said house that this last summer [1605] there was great resort to the said house by persons unknown, as well as by five or six coaches upon a sabbath day, coming in at a back gate newly made on the back side of the house, as by sundry persons resorting thither by water, who commonly returned from thence daily, in the afternoon or evening of the same day. He also saith that the said house is well stored with wood, seacoal and charcoals, and that a man and two women with a maid did usually keep that house . . . He further saith that one Valentine Wilkinson the bailiff of the manor of Erith and his wife did usually resort to the said house."⁴²

By midsummer, Erith also was being carefully watched. By then Salisbury was aware of an impending plot, which may account for this greater vigilance. On Midsummer Day Garnet wrote to a nun in Louvain :

"Besides the general affliction we find ourselves now betrayed in both our places of abode and are forced to wander up and down until we get a fit place . . . We kept Corpus Christi day [30 May] with great solemnity and music, and the

day of the octave [6 June] made a solemn procession about a great garden, the house being watched, which we knew not till the next day when we departed twenty-five in the sight of all, in several parties, leaving half a dozen servants behind and all is well."⁴³

This house with the large garden was probably Fremland (Essex), the house of Sir Ken Sulyard, and it was here "a little before St. James' tide" [25 July] that Fr. Greenway first acquainted Garnet, under the seal of confession, with the plot, which he had heard from Catesby in confession.⁴⁴

Garnet continued in Essex till the middle of August, and then moved to Erith, "for the house in Essex is pernicious about that time though we might have had it till Michaelmas, and we feared White Webbs was discovered and durst not remain there past one night or two."⁴⁵

However they were back at White Webbs for the feast of St. Bartholomew [24 August] and stayed the inside of a week. On 29 August Garnet wrote to Persons :

"Meanwhile the number of Catholics is greatly increased and I hope that this journey of mine, which God allowing I am about to undertake tomorrow—both for the sake of reviving our forces and because my former dwelling has been traced by the diligence of our foes, and I have no reliable abode in town—will not be without opportunity of furthering Catholic interests."⁴⁶

On 30 August they set out from White Webbs on pilgrimage to St. Winefred's Well, Holywell. The party consisted of Fr. Garnet, Eleanor and Anne, Eleanor's son, William Brooksby, with his young wife, Little John and some servants. As they passed through the midlands they were joined by others. There came Sir Everard Digby and his lady, Fr. Oldcorn and his servant John Chambers *alias* Ralph Astley (a lay brother), Fr. Tesimond *alias* Greenway, a tall gentleman calling himself Thomas Digby, Sir Francis Linion and his daughter, and Elizabeth Vaux with Fathers Gerard and Percy from Harrowden. By the time they reached the well there were thirty of them, excluding servants, and the women walked the last stage of the journey bare-footed.

Going and coming they stayed at the houses of their friends Mr. Grant, Ambrose Rockwood and Thomas Winter, all future conspirators.

They came back by way of Daventry, and Fr. Garnet with the two sisters spent a night at Rushton Hall. It was a house of mourning. Sir Thomas Tresham had died on 11 September, and his widow kept her chamber. His eldest son Francis, on his own death-bed in the Tower before the end of the year said "He had as lief choose such a death [by hanging] the pain whereof could not continue half an hour, . . . than to die after such a manner as he exemplified in his father, Sir Thomas Tresham, who continued so long sick as he did, and in such extremity tossing and tumbling from one side and from one bed to another."⁴⁷

With Tresham there passed away the foremost Catholic layman of the old school, and one of the most attractive figures that Northamptonshire has produced. His striking personality has dominated these pages ever since we first met him, with drawn sword, in Kettering market. But here I have been concerned only with his influence on the story of the Vaux family and have not mentioned the other sides of his versatile genius. He is chiefly remembered, of course, as a builder. His great house at Rushton still stands. The triangular lodge built in honour of the Trinity, and the exquisite New Beild at Lyveden, built in honour of the Passion, but never finished and now a ruin, are lasting tributes to his deep piety and unwavering faith. The market hall at Rothwell, happily completed by another famous architect of the county, bears witness to his civic loyalty. In a terrible age he managed to combine these two loyalties and never wavered in either. Tresham's letters show that he was something of a scholar, quite at home in Latin, and well versed in the Fathers. "My study is little" he told the Privy Council, "yet the most time I employed in study is in divinity." A long list of his books includes many works in Italian, treatises on Mathematics, as well as books of poetry and literature. There are a few letters extant between him and his wife on the subject of growing fruit,⁴⁸ showing yet another of his many interests. On 27 October, 1609, his widow, seeking Salisbury's protection against John Lamb, sent him fifty fruit trees from Lyveden for Hatfield.

"I think no one place can furnish your lordship with more and better trees and of a fitter growth than this ground. For my late worthy husband, as he did take great delight, so did he come to great experience and judgment therein. Scarce is there I think any fruit of note but he had it, if it could be conveniently gotten."⁴⁹

Tresham does not seem to have been as efficiently impoverished by persecution as was his friend Lord Vaux, but when he died his debts amounted to the then huge total of £20,000.⁵⁰

We have seen that a Jesuit accounted him an atheist, so let us conclude with the tribute of a priest who became later a Benedictine. The words in italics are in Latin in the original.

"I have an incredible desire to behold the amiable countenance of all our worthy confessant Catholics, and especially of yourself, who, by the singular grace and assistance of God, have opposed yourself in defence of that cause *as a wall of brass against the forces of hostile domination*. Of whom I may boldly say as of another Moses, *if thou hadst not stood in the breach against the violators of the Catholic Faith, many, I will not say would have fallen, but would not have battled so stoutly in the Lord.*"

These are the words of Father Thomas Hill, *alias* Buckland, written in 1602 from Newgate prison, "he then expecting to be executed the next day following."⁵¹

III

From Rushton Fr. Garnet with his companions rode to Gothurst, now Gayhurst, Sir Everard Digby's house in Buckinghamshire. But by now Anne Vaux's worst suspicions had been aroused. At the houses of Winter and Grant she had noticed the many fine horses in the stables and "she told Fr. Garnet that she feared these wild heads had something in hand, and prayed him for God's sake to talk with Mr. Catesby." Garnet promised to do so, and later assured her that there was nothing to worry about. The horses were for Flanders, where Catesby hoped to have a commission under the Archduke, and Catesby clinched the matter by showing her a letter of recommendation written by Garnet.⁵²

But she was still worried and later went to Garnet, either at Harrowden or at Gothurst, and "told this examine *that she feared that some trouble or disorder was towards for* that some of the gentlewomen had demanded of her where they should bestow themselves until the brunt was passed in the begining of the Parliament. And this examine asking her who told her so, she said that she durst not tell who told her so, she was charged with secrecy."⁵³ The words in italics have been added, and they may well be another specimen of Salisbury's sinister embroidery.

On 4 October Garnet wrote to Persons :

"This I write from the elder Nicholas his residence [Gothurst] where I find my ostesse with all her posterity very well, and we are to go within few days nearer London, yet are we unprovided of a house nor can find any convenient for any long time. But we must be fain to borrow some private house for a time, and live more privately, until this great storm be overblown, for most strict inquiries are prevised, wherein if my ostesse by not quite undone she speedeth better than many of her neighbours."

There follow two long paragraphs describing the increasing severity of the persecution, and making it clear that the "storm" has nothing to do with the impending plot. "The prisoners at Wisbech are almost famished. They are very close, and can have no help from abroad [i.e. outside] ; but the King allowing a mark a week for each one, the keeper maketh his gain, and giveth them meat [food] but three days a week."⁵⁴ As we have seen, Wisbech was reopened in the previous June. Fr. Garnet was evidently anticipating more stringent laws against papists at the opening of Parliament, and was worried because he and his friends had no suitable house, i.e. a house fitted with hiding-holes.

As it turned out they did not move nearer London. They stayed at Gothurst till 21 October and then rode over to Harrowden. It was Anne's first homecoming for many years.⁵⁵

St. Luke's Day [18 October] which was the regular date for the Jesuits to meet fell this year on a Friday, and Friday was inconvenient, as it gave them so little time to get back to their posts for Sunday. It seems therefore probable that the meeting

was fixed for this Monday, the 21st, and as Garnet had no house of his own they met at Harrowden. It was not perhaps unnatural that Sir Everard and Lady Digby should ride over with their guests. It is less easy to explain why Catesby was there. But so it happened with tragic consequences. For in the evening Catesby offered to ride back to Gothurst with Digby, and as these two handsome friends rode by Wellingborough, Digby, having been sworn to secrecy on a primer was inveigled into the Gunpowder Plot.

Nor was the day any happier for Fr. Garnet. Under the seal of confession Fr. Tesimond revealed to him the details of the plot already known to him in general terms, and Garnet rode back to Gothurst with the awful secret burning within him.

Digby informs us that

“Catesby advised this examinee to seek out some convenient house in Warwickshire or Worcestershire where this examinee might live this winter, the better thereby to be able to protect himself upon any occasion and do good to the cause, having most assistance in those parts [Warwickshire being full of papists]. According to which direction this examinee did borrow a house of Mr. Thomas Throckmorton for one month, purposing to take it longer or to enquire out some other (if that were not to be had), if this examinee’s wife should like to live there.”⁵⁶

Fr. Garnet says : “Not daring to go to White Webbs, and being disappointed of two houses which we would have taken about London, because they were unfit for our purpose, we were glad to seek to sojourn in the country for a while till we could get a house about London, and so accepted the offer of Sir Everard to be his tenants at Coughton, being also indifferent to have sojourned with him at his own house. But it was too little, and I perceived also an intention in him to draw us to that country for their own projects, which I could well imagine, but was not in particular acquainted withal, though I perceived by their familiarity and proceedings that Sir Everard was drawn in also.”⁵⁷ This, however, is from the suspect confession of 8 March.

On 29 October, therefore, Fr. Garnet, with Eleanor, Anne, Lady Digby and Little John, and two servants rode from

Gothurst to Coughton. It was here that Catherine Throckmorton, daughter of Nicholas Lord Vaux, had reared her family of nineteen, and it was here that Thomas Tresham had spent his boyhood. There was a great gathering of Catholics for the feast of All Saints. Garnet preached. Knowing what he now knew it was unwise to take as his text a couplet from the hymn for the Office of Lauds for that feast :

Gentem auferte perfidam
Credentium de finibus.

“Take away the perfidious people from the territory of the Faithful !”

This was Friday, 1 November. Saturday was All Souls' Day and doubtless they prayed for their dead. And then on Tuesday the news spread like wild-fire all over England. Desperate men rode hard all day along the Watling Street, the very road that Tresham had ridden so full of hope, to proclaim the new King, less than three years before. At Brickhill one of them branched right and came as fast as horse could carry him, through Woburn Sands and Newport Pagnell, through Olney and Wellingborough, to Harrowden Hall.

Salisbury hid his exultation and expressed only horrified surprise. The Powder Plot had succeeded beyond his wildest dreams.

IV

When the news of the discovery of the Plot reached them, Fr. Garnet and his companions ran to ground. Salisbury received information that Anne had been at Hartley Court in Berkshire, the house of a Mr. Speake, early in November, but she had gone away again and the house on a sudden had been sold.⁵⁸ Doubtless Fr. Garnet and the rest of the household were with her. After that there is a long silence as to their whereabouts, a silence that remains unbroken to this day.

We have seen that White Webbs had been under suspicion for months, and was not considered a safe lodging for more than a night or two. Yet on Saturday, 26 October, two days after the delivery of the mysterious letter to Lord Monteagle, and when the conspirators knew that the game was up, Catesby, with that unaccountable lunacy that characterises the actions of most

of the conspirators at this time, turned up at White Webbs with a companion and his cook, with no attempt at secrecy, and with no appearance of apprehension. He told James Johnson that he would stay the night and ride over to hunt with the King at Royston on the morrow. But next morning he had changed his mind, and "said he would stay there and be merry with some of his friends for three or four days, and did send his man for venison; and the next day, being as he thinks on the Monday, Mr. Winter and two brothers [Wright?] and one Mr. Perkins came to him, and there they stayed three or four days." This Mr. Perkins, who posed as Mrs. Perkin's brother is variously described as a western man, a gentleman of middle stature, a tall man about 40, with a brown beard inclining to yellow, with a long visage somewhat lean, apparelled in stuff or fustian, and seldom absent from White Webbs for more than three months. He was perhaps Matthew Batty.

This brings us to about the end of October. "About two days after, Mr. Catesby with one of the brothers came again, lay there all night, and early in the morning departed, since which time he [Johnson] never saw them."⁵⁹ There seems to have been no attempt whatever at secrecy. On the contrary they made so much ado that Fr. Garnet heard all about it in far-away Coughton.

"We had heard in the country," he writes, "that Mr. Catesby had had in our absence great meetings at White Webbs, grievous to the gentlewoman his cousin, who said it would make the house more noted, and why did we absent ourselves but to have it out of suspicion?"⁶⁰

Catesby went from White Webbs to London, waited for the arrest of Guy Fawkes, and then rode like mad to Warwickshire. So much for the "brains" of the conspiracy.

On 11 November the pursuivants swooped on White Webbs. Thomas Wilson, Salisbury's surveyor, but one who did spying in his spare time (it was he who traced Anne to Hartley Court) came with his cousin Francis Amice or Amis.

"We have with our best care and regard" they wrote to Salisbury that evening, "made a diligent search of the house in Enfield Chase called White Webbs, that was sometimes the

house of Doctor Hewick, where we found only four persons, named James Johnson, Elizabeth Shephard, Margaret Walker and Jane Robinson, servants unto one Mrs. Perkins widow. But Walley (named in your Lordship's letters) or any other suspicious person (but the said James Johnson) was not to be found there nor any [munition but a case of pistols and two fowling pieces, *inserted*] papers but certain popish books and relics.

"And for that we found the said Johnson to be a very obstinate papist and every the women, we thought good to examine them severally, which examinations we have sent herewith unto your honours, signifying nigh unto your good Lordships that, finding the foresaid James Johnson to be very perverse and obstinate, we thought it our duty to conduct him unto ward until your Lord's pleasure be known unto us what shall be done with him, for in our poor opinion we take the man to be a very dangerous person to be suffered to go at liberty.

"Also we find the house to be contrived into many lodgings and rooms [with many doors, trapdoors and passages out of all sides, *inserted*]. But we can by no means find any secret conveyance within it. And for that the three women (remaining within the house) are of the popish religion, we have appointed the house to be sufficiently guarded until we shall receive your Lordship's further pleasure herein."

He encloses the examinations of the servants.

James Johnson, aged about forty saith

"That the trunk where the books and the Romish relics were found doth belong into one Mr. Thomas Jennings. his wife [Dorothy Brooksby, née Wiseman] who went from White Webbs at Candlemas last [February 2nd].

"Item he saith the one Mr. Meaze his master, a Berkshire man, took the house for his sister Mrs. Perkins, widow, who came thither about Bartholomewtide last and stayed there but a week. But Mr. Mese was not there these three years.

"Item he confesseth that he hath served in that house these four years and more.

"Item he confesseth that he is a Romish Catholic and never (as yet) was at church, nor yet at Mass in his life.

"Item he saith that the last week there came unto the house

one Mr. Perkins, brother unto the gentlewoman and one Mr. Skinner (a lawyer) and Mr. Jennings and one manservant, and other company : before that there hath not been any of long time.

"Item he saith that Mr. Jennings lay in the said house on Allhallows day and night last, and that Mr. Skinner lay there two nights.

"Item that the wine, sweetmeats and store of other provisions was layed in a year since."

Elizabeth Shepherd, wife of William Shepherd, Mrs. Perkins' coachman saith :

"That the trunk [where the] books were found is Mr. Jennings, who [carried it from ? *torn*] Royston unto the said house the night the King went from Royston unto London. And that the said Jennings lay at White Webbs two or three nights.

"Item she saith that Jennings is a man about the age of forty years [he was less than thirty] and that he liveth about London. To her knowledge he hath no certain habit [*ation torn*] . . .

"Item she confesseth and acknowledgeth that herself is a Romish Catholic and ever hath been. But denieth that ever she heard Mass in the said house, and yet hath been there a servant by the space of four years.

"Item she confesseth that she was never yet at church."

Margaret Walker aged 26, servant to Mrs. Perkins, saith

"That three gentlemen came from Royston unto White Webbs, that day the King came from there last, and stayed there two nights.

"Item she saith that she hath served Perkins, her said mistress by the space of three years, and acknowledgeth that she is and always hath been from her infancy of the Romish religion, but denieth that ever she hath heard Mass, or gone unto any church."

But it was Jane Robinson who confessed the awful truth and compromised the others.

"The said examine saith and confesseth that about three months last past there was a Mass said in White Webbs house.

And that none but herself, James Johnson, Elizabeth Shepherd and Margaret Walker were present. But remembereth not what the priest's name is, nor where he remaineth. But saith that he was apparelled like a gentleman."⁶¹

Poor Jane! She was frightened. She was only fourteen. But what a lot more she might have said.

Salisbury's good pleasure was, of course, that James Johnson should be sent up to London and committed to the Gatehouse.

There he was "lodged in a dungeon upon the bare ground, for the keeper (though he were earnestly entreated by the other prisoners) would not allow him so much as straw to lie upon, pretending that if he had any straw to lie on he would with that set fire on the house."⁶²

He was examined again on 6 December, when he confessed the names of two more visitors to White Webbs, Turner and Jenyns. He even volunteered some information.

"He saith of these, Jenyns and Turner can skill of music for Jenynge plaieth of the base viole and Turner of a lute."⁶³

But this was not quite the sort of information that they were seeking.

His next examination was on Christmas Day, of all days. He gave them the disappointing information that at White Webbs his master "Mr. Measy" and Mistress Perkins had quite separate apartments. But he "denieth that Catesby was ever in the said house to his knowledge or that there was any venison there upon the Sunday after Allhallows Day."⁶⁴

The house at Erith had not yet been discovered, but as it had been rented by Catesby there was some local excitement, and the servants, a man and two women "presently upon the discovery of the said late treason fled from the said house, leaving all these goods in the house without anybody to take care thereof but a 'Littell gerle,' who upon the fear of these sudden departures was so frightened therewith as that the neighbours in commiseration of her sent a poor woman of the town to stay there with her who yet abideth there [13 Feb. 1606]." Valentine Wilkenson the bailiff, and his wife "were recusants before the late Treason discovered, and that since they do usually repair to Church."⁶⁵

The fate of the conspirators is matter of general history.

Catesby, Percy and the two Wrights were killed fighting at Holbeach House (Staffs.) on 8 November. On 16 November, when they had been buried a week, the Privy Council addressed

“A letter to the high sheriff of the county of Stafford to cause the bodies of Percy, Catesby, the two Wrights and some others of the traitors that are slain and buried to be taken up out of their graves and bowelled, and their quarters to be set up in some principal towns where they most led their lives, and the heads of Percy and Catesby to be sent up hither purposely.”⁶⁶

The rest of the conspirators were soon rounded up. Francis Tresham was arrested in London on 12 November, and lodged in the Tower. Last of all to be taken was Robert Winter about Christmas. But the Jesuits, who were so earnestly sought after, were still at large at the end of the year.

CHAPTER VIII

ELIZABETH

I

IT would be too much to expect that the house where Fr. Gerard was sheltered would escape attention. But strange to say it was something not directly connected with Gerard that made Salisbury point an accusing finger at Elizabeth Vaux. To explain this we must go back to the Spring of 1605.

Some time before Easter, Elizabeth was looking about for a suitable match for her son, Edward Lord Vaux, who would be seventeen in September. She entered into negotiations with the Earl of Suffolk, who was immensely wealthy, to marry her son to one of his daughters. But for some reason the negotiations hung fire, and at Easter Elizabeth wrote a letter to her friend Agnes Lady Wenman, whom we have met playing cards with Fr. Gerard, complaining of the delay. This letter has perished, but in it Elizabeth apparently attributed the delay to the fact that she and her son were obstinate papists, and then exhorted Agnes to pray because soon "Tottenham would turn French." This was an old saying, meaning that something extraordinary was going to happen.

Unfortunately this letter was delivered not to Agnes, but to her mother-in-law Lady Tasborough, who opened it. Lady Tasborough, in extenuation says that it was only lightly sealed, and presumably the seal came to pieces in her hands. But she not only opened it, but read it, and showed it to her son Sir Richard Wenman. When eventually the letter was delivered to Lady Wenman and she saw that it had been opened, she naturally had words with her mother-in-law, told Elizabeth all about it, and said she would keep it in case of trouble. So far it was a storm in a teacup, with Lady Tasborough behaving as a conventional mother-in-law, but later on the Earl of Salisbury and Lord Chief Justice Popham were to show far more interest in this letter than in Guy Fawkes and all his barrels of gunpowder.

By the end of May negotiations for the marriage seem to have

fallen through for on 2 June Edward wrote to Salisbury requesting a licence to travel for two or three years in foreign countries "for the gaining of languages." Although he is only sixteen he shows that he has learnt all there is to know of the gentle art of flattery, speaks of the "many honourable regards shown by the late Lord Treasurer, Salisbury's father (Lord Burghley) towards his grandfather, father and family, even in his own memory (he was nine when Burghley died), and goes on to say that he has "lost the hope of his greater suit in another place, wherein his lordship showed his goodwill and gladness that he should be matched in so worthy a family." He says that he would have thought himself more happy thereby to have been linked so near to Salisbury's worthy and hopeful son.¹

He is referring to William Cecil, who became second Earl of Salisbury and who married Catherine Howard, the youngest daughter of the Earl of Suffolk, and sister to the young lady intended for himself. The date of the marriage of William Cecil has been variously given as 1606 and 1608, but this letter shows that it was before June, 1605, when he was only thirteen.

As this flattery did not produce the licence, Edward wrote again on 9 July,² doubtless enclosing a second present, and this time he was successful. He received a licence "to travel beyond the seas and there to remain three years from the date hereof and to take with him three servants, three horses and fourscore pounds in money." It is dated 14 July, 1605.³

Incidentally there is also one for Francis Tresham, for two years and it is dated 2 November, 1605, three days before the Powder Plot!

There is also a letter of Fr. Garnet's addressed to "all Reverend Superiors in Christ of Houses or Colleges, or to any Father of the said Society." It says

"The illustrious gentleman, the bearer of this letter, who is setting out for Rome with pious intent and has deserved excellently well of our Society, has begged me to commend him to all of ours, of whose help and counsel in the vicissitudes of so long a journey he could make use. . . . I declare that nothing can be bestowed upon him that is beyond his deserts: nay more, that to all of us engaged in this mission, and to our Reverend Father General, to whom we have often written

about him, nothing will be more pleasing than that they all bestow on him every office of charity etc." This is dated 27 August, 1605, and may very well be intended for Lord Vaux.⁴

Meanwhile, however, the King and Queen set out on a progress through the midlands. On 1 August the King spent two nights at Mr. Hervey's house at Thurleigh, while the Queen stayed with Lord St. John at Bletsoe.⁵ By this time, of course, the gunpowder was stored under the houses of Parliament, and Salisbury knew enough to make him gravely suspicious. But such suspicions were not allowed to interfere with the King's hunting.

On 3 August the King and Queen moved to Lord Mordaunt's house at Drayton. Lord Mordaunt was a notable papist and it was given out afterwards that he had a little plan to murder the King while he was a guest at Drayton "by way of a mask." The plan was "countermanded and checked by a Jesuit or priest, who willed forbearance at that time, because, said he, there is a course in hand that will cut up the very root, and remove all impediments whatsoever, that can be alleged to hinder the cause."⁶ Lord Mordaunt admitted that Rookwood and Winter, two conspirators, were at Drayton on 2 August.⁷

From Drayton the royal party went to Sir Anthony Mildmay's house at Apethorpe, for three nights. There was not the slightest cloud of apprehension. Edward Lassells wrote from Apethorpe on 6 August to the Earl of Shrewsbury :

"The Court is now at Sir Anthony Mildmay's both for the King and Queen. Here is also my Lord of Salisbury, my Lord of Suffolk, my Lord of Devonshire, my Lord of Northampton and other Lords of the Council, which makes the train very great. But news here is none, neither public nor private business stirring, no suits granted, but all very quiet, and excellent hunting."⁸

On 9 August the King went to Sir Edward Watson at Rockingham, and the Queen to Kirby Hall, which was then tenanted by a Mrs. Elizabeth Mallory, another noted papist.

On the 12th they all went to Mr. Edward Griffin's popish house at Braybrooke, and, as though this were not popery

enough, in the afternoon the King came on to Harrowden for a night and the Queen to Pitchley.⁹ Now this was a good opportunity to reopen negotiations about the marriage, and, according to Elizabeth, she spoke of it to the Earl of Northampton who was uncle to the Earl of Suffolk, and he told her to leave it all to him. There is no confirmation of this, and it seems strange that she should have gone about it in this way when the Earl of Suffolk was actually in the house.

Such were the events that preceded the Powder Plot and which will be amplified when we come to the actual examinations. It will be interesting to contrast the behaviour of Anne and Elizabeth. Both exhibit the fierce and fearless courage of their sex. Anne followed her womanly instincts and never made a mistake: Elizabeth was much too clever, and in the first and all-important crisis completely lost her head.

II

The Plot was discovered in the early hours of the morning of Tuesday, 5 November. The same day Lord Chief Justice Popham wrote to Salisbury:

"... A like note your Lordship shall receive herein of an expectation that Mrs. Vaux had of something to be done, and I know it by such a manner as I assure myself the matter is true. And both Gerard and Wally [Garnet] the Jesuits make that the chieftest place of their access and therefore like she may know somewhat. Both Mr. Wenman himself and the Lady Tasborough do know of this. Wherefore how far forth these should [be] fit to be dealt in I humbly leave to your Lordship's consideration."¹⁰

This was quick work. We can only assume that Lady Tasborough was in London at the time, and as soon as she heard of the Plot rushed off to communicate with Popham, who, busy though he must have been, evidently found time to listen to her unlikely story, and thought it worth sending to Salisbury.

It would be interesting to know exactly what Lady Tasborough said to Salisbury. It is unlikely that she minimised the treasonable character of the letter. All that now remains is a brief note in the handwriting of Levinus Munck, Salisbury's secretary:

"Contents of Mrs. Vaux's letter. Fast and pray that that may come to pass that we purpose, which if it do we shall see Tottenham turned French."¹¹ This is probably an embroidered version of the letter, which does not appear to have had the remotest connection with the Plot.

Elizabeth soon got wind of Lady Tasborough's information, and here she made her first false step. She wrote to Lady Wenman to return the letter ; or rather she wrote to Lady Fermor to ask her to retrieve it. As it had been quite an innocent letter, she should have left it alone. How seriously the Government took this suspicious conduct is clear from the quantity of ink spilt over it.

On 18 November Lady Tasborough was examined by Sir Edward Coke the Attorney General :

"1. Being demanded whether Mrs. Vaux did write a letter to the Lady Wenman her daughter-in-law, and if she did, when the same was delivered, answereth that Mrs. Vaux did write a letter to the Lady Wenman about Easter last.

"2. Being further asked what was the effect of that letter, saith that the effect of that letter was that Mrs. Vaux persuaded the Lady Wenman to be of good comfort and not to despair for that ere it were long she should see a remedy or toleration for religion, or to such effect.

"3. Being demanded how she knew that letter to contain such matter, either by sight or by relation of the Lady Wenman, confesseth that the letter being loosely brought by a boy and slightly sealed (there being at that time some dryness or mislike between the Lady Wenman and her) she (the Lady Tasborough) opened the letter, much condemning the great indiscretion of Mrs. Vaux, and sealed it up again, and so the messenger delivered it to the Lady Wenman, who perceiving it had been opened challenged her for it, which she confessed, and found fault with the Lady Wenman for being so familiar with Mrs. Vaux.

"4. Being demanded whether Sir Richard Wenman knew of this letter and what opinion he had of it,

Answereth that he, understanding of it, was much offended with his wife for receiving of any such letter, and that she had such acquaintance with Mrs. Vaux.

"5. Being demanded where the letter is,
Answereth that she thinketh that the Lady Wenman (who
now lieth in childbed) hath it.

"She further saith that as she took the letter (coming from
a woman) to be of no great consequence, so being particularly
demanded of it she held it her duty to declare her whole
knowledge (whomsoever it concern) therein."¹²

The last statement is surely a lie. This did not satisfy the
Council and on 3 December Sir Richard Wenman was examined
by Coke and Popham.

"He saith that in Easter term last there came to his sight
a letter written by Mrs. Vaux unto the Lady Wenman his wife ;
about the same time which coming to the hands of the Lady
Tasborough, this examines mother, she opened the letter and
showed the same to this examine, saying it was a foolish
letter and that Mrs. Vaux was a foolish woman to write so
to this examine's wife. Yet the Lady Tasborough sealed it
up again and gave it to a man of hers who delivered it to a
man of this examine who delivered it to this examine's
wife, who found fault that the letter had been opened, and
telling this examine of it he found fault with his wife for
having any dealing with Mrs. Vaux in respect he ever conceived
that Mrs. Vaux during his absence in the Low Countries had
corrupted his wife in religion.

"The writing of which letter was to this effect, first she
mentioned the match made of the marriage of her son to my
Lord of Suffolk's daughter ; then she took exception that this
examine came not to see her at the time he had been in
London, but yet seemed again to excuse it for herself, in that
she thought it was in respect that those of her religion were
disgraceful and concluded in this manner, or to the same
effect; that she should pray, for that she did hope or look that
shortly Tottenham would turn French. As for any other
words in the same letter he remembereth not.

"He saith his wife was with Mrs. Vaux at Mrs. Symons
house in Oxfordshire [Baldwin Brightwell. Mary Vaux had
married Sir George Simeon in 1604], about some fortnight or
three weeks after St. Jamestide last [25 July]. All what passed
there between his wife and Mrs. Vaux at that time this examine

knoweth not. And saith that about some three weeks now past [about 14 November] the Lady Fermor wrote to this examine's wife upon the request of Mrs. Vaux to have the said letter from her or a copy thereof, who wrote to the Lady Fermor (as she told this examine) that she had it not, and this examine now at his coming up requiring to have the letter off his wife she told this examine she had it not nor made reckoning of it after she had challenged the Lady Tasborough for opening of it. He saith that John Mathew, one of this examine's serving men said after, as she told this examine, had burnt the letter."¹³

Sir John Popham wrote to Salisbury the same day :

"Mr. Attorney and myself have examined Sir Richard Wenman, who calls to remembrance that this was the conclusion of Mrs. Vaux's letter to his wife : viz that Mrs. Vaux moved her to pray for that she hoped or looked that shortly Tottenham would be turned French. But for the other words comprised in the note I delivered you [on 5 November] (whereof I kept no copy) he says he remembers not, and affirms that he wife tells him she has lost the letter, whereof I make some doubt. But it appears that letters have passed between the Lady Fermor and the Lady Wenman touching the said letter, which Sir Richard says, if it shall so seem good, he will press to get at his wife's [hands], and the former letter also if it may be, and will send up such of his folks as have seen the former letter also, who haply may remember more of it than himself."¹⁴

But the matter could not rest there, and as Lady Wenman was in childbed and the matter urgent, Sir Richard was instructed to examine his own wife. Two days later he writes to Popham :

"According to your Lordship's direction I have examined my wife and have with your own note sent her answer written all with her own hand and subscribed by her.

"Touching her conference with Mrs. Vaux at Mr. Simeon his house, she saith there was some speech between them of the opening of the letter, but that she promised her to keep the letter she doth not remember.

"I have also sent your Lordship the examination of my wife's maid with her hand to it."¹⁵

Lady Wenman's examination written in her exquisite hand tells us but little more :

"The letter being opened before it came to my hand, I offered to shew it to my husband, but he threw it me again, giving me some hard words, as misliking I should have any commerce with my cousin Vaux, as this bearer being at that present by can inform your Lordship. Whereat I being much grieved, knowing my mother-in-law's opening of it, and her shewing it him bred this discontent between us, I was careful to keep the letter that I might challenge her for it, which I openly did when she afterwards came to my house. After that I protest I was careless of it, and whether amongst other letters I burnt it, or otherwise bestowed it I know not, for of my faith I have it not.

"For my own mother's letter [Lady Fermor's], touching that point, the words were these :—'My cousin Vaux desires you to send her the letter which she writ to you concerning her son's marriage, about Easter, or the copy, for she hears my Lady Tasborough hath complained of it.' My answer to her back again was, that I had used it as those did letters which were not regarded, either burnt it or lost it.

"Touching the contents of my cousin Vaux's letter to me, it was chiefly concerning her son's marriage to my Lord of Suffolk's daughter, and some challenging of unkindness for my husband's not seeking her, he being so long in London. But she said the cause was for that those of her profession were now in disgrace. And she withal added, 'notwithstanding pray, for Tottenham may turn French,' or words to the like effect. This is all I can call to memory of the contents."¹⁶

The reader must be heartily sick of this letter, but I give the short note of Margaret Pain the maid, as it is her only claim to immortality :

"First she saith she remembreth well that there was such a letter sent by Mrs. Vaux to her mistress about Easter last. Touching the contents she remembers that she took some unkindness in it of her master's not seeing her. And that

these words Tottenham may be turned French were in the said letter, she doth also remember, but how they were applied she cannot call to memory. But for fasting or any purpose that was in hand or intended she remembreth no such thing."¹⁷

We need only add that Lady Wenman was summoned to London on 13 Dec. (after her delivery) and examined on oath before Popham and Coke. Her examination adds little to the story of the letter, except that she has since "made dilligent search for it, and cannot by no means find it," that she "wishes with all her heart that she had it to produce, for that would give better satisfaction than she is able to do" and that she has found the letter her mother wrote to her "which (so much thereof as remaineth) she hath delivered up."¹⁸

The Government was nothing if not thorough, but this first slip of Elizabeth Vaux led to no grave consequences. Her second mistake is less easy to explain.

III

Elizabeth was not the only one who got to hear that Lady Tasborough had denounced her to the authorities. Her father Sir John Roper knew of the suspicion that attached to her within a day or two of the discovery of the Plot. He wrote a letter to her which was delivered on 9 November. It has not survived, but evidently Sir John told his daughter that it was very naughty of her to conspire to blow up the Parliament House. Elizabeth sat down immediately and answered it. Her letter bears obvious signs of having been written in haste, and there are blobs where the paper has been wetted before the ink was dry, which must be her hot, indignant tears that fell, as her pen raced furiously over the paper.

+

Ihs : Ma :

"Sir I can not but mervayle att your straynge & unlooked for letters. I wissh your self & all others should know I ame as innocent & free from the euer knowinge of that plotte as who so euer is most free, & doe as much abhore the intention, & for anye letters of myne I wissh that maye be shewed &

the uttermost made agaynst me, so confident ame I of euer writinge anye thinge, which it was impossible I should [of *erased*] neuere knowinge nor imaginige as god doth best know & as it is playne enough to freends heare, howe easy so euer your self to be beleewe the worst uppon I know not what reporte. I did receue your former letters wherin you did much blame me for refussing the match & offer of my La: of Suffolke; by that I see you heare strayne things & untrewes, but tyme will lett you see & know better howe I haue proceeded in that matter, & I sentt you a letter of my Lo: of Northampton that maye make it playne unto you that nowe wee wer to expect answer from him of the sertaynty of that match & to that end my sone had a perpos to haue come upp to London himself one thorsday or friday last if by chance Sir George Farmore & his La: had not come to supere to us one wedensday nyght & towld us [of *erased*] the first newes of this pitefull & [t *erased*] & tragecall intendment & then I thought nott beste to send him.

[Written sideways in left margin]

"Mr. frauncis Polton hath the letter for you & hath bin in London this fortnyght & euery weeke hath written to me that you were owt of towne, so crauing youre blessing with remembrance of my duty I rest

Your obediend daughter

Eliza Vaux."¹⁹

This letter was given to Thomas Race, her father's messenger who had brought his. Race set out immediately but was stayed at Bedford, and the letter found on him. He was examined on 12 November by Henry, Earl of Kent, and others:

"This examine saith that he is a porter and dwelleth in Cattern wheele lane in Fleet Street by the conduit there near unto Salisbury Court, and that he was sent from London by Sir John Roper with a letter to his daughter Mrs. Vaux to Harradyne in the county of Northampton the 9th of this November which he delivered and stayed there after the delivering thereof about an hour and a half, and then this examine saith Mrs. Vaux sent him a letter by a gentlewoman to be carried by him to her father Sir John Roper lying over against the Checkar in the Strand in St. Clement's parish. He

saith he is to have 14 shillings of Sir John Roper for his journey. Further he saith that he, delivering Sir John Roper's letter, sent to Mrs. Vaux, to a man of hers ; shortly after she had received it she sent for this examine and told him that the letter needed not to have been sent to her for that she was very free from those matters whereof her father had written to her. Further he saith that one Mr. Allen a cheese man of Sir John Roper's came to this examine to give him to carry his Masters letter to Harradyne aforesaid. More he doth not confess."

Endorsed "Tho. Race his examination, & the letter therein-closed found about him at [Donstable *struck out* and Bedford *overwritten*] Mrs. Vauxez letter to the Lady Wynham."²⁰

Now this letter to her father contains Elizabeth's second mistake. There can be no doubt that Sir George Fermor did not come to Harrowden by chance on Wednesday, 6 November. She sent for him that morning. Sir George testified on 14 November :

"That upon Wednesday morning by nine of the clock, the 6th of this November, a messenger came to him from the Lord Vaux to desire his coming unto the Lord Vaux's house being 14 miles from Sir George.

"That he rode thither that day and was there by 5 of the clock in the afternoon.

"That Mrs. Vaux told him she sent for him to the end the Lord Vaux might ride up to London with him to treat with my Lord of Suffolk touching a marrying for the Lord Vaux with his Lordship's daughter.

"That she had heard that there was some garboyl in London and that therefore she would forbear for a time the sending up of the Lord Vaux until things were quieted.

"That Mr. Hurleston [Huddleston], Sir Edward's eldest son was there that night.

"That Mrs. Vaux told him a servant of Mr. Griffin Markham told her of the broil.

"That the said Wednesday at night near about midnight one of his sons came posting to him and told him of the detestable purpose, whereupon the next morning he hasted here . . .

"Sir George said that he found fault with Mistress Vaux

that she had not advertised him of the broil and of the change of her mind thereupon, whereby he might have eased off that travel.

"He said Sir Griffin Markham's man that brought the advertisement of the broils was but a passenger and knew not what became of him."²¹

When we remember that Sir George suffered from gout we understand his annoyance at being called out to ride more than twenty miles in mid-November on a wild goose chase. Some days later (the document is undated) Sir George was sent a list of ten interrogatories to answer :

"I answer. True it is that upon Wednesday mentioned in the said Interrogatory [6 Nov.] there came one Thomas Payne unto me, servant to my Lord Vaux or to his mother, to desire me from my Lord that I would come over to him if I were able for that his business was such that he could not come to me.

"The messenger came unto me the same Wednesday, to my house at Easton [Neston] between eight and nine of the clock in the morning, and I came to Harrowden between four and five of the clock the same evening. When I came there demanding the cause why I was sent for, Mrs. Vaux (my Lord being present) told me that I did well understand there had been communication between the Earl of Suffolk and her for a marriage between my Lord her son and the Lady Elizabeth his daughter, and that the Earl of Northampton, when the King's Majesty was at her house this summer did desire her that she would not enter into speech with any other for marriage with her son, until she had heard from him, and prescribed a time when he would send unto her : which time (as she said) was expired, and hearing nothing from my Lord of Northampton she was advised (as she said) by some of her friends to send my Lord up to London, to see what he could do in the matter, to make an end thereof one way or other. And knowing (saith she) none nearer of kin to my Lord than yourself, nor fitter to accompany him in that action, and hearing besides that you were either gone up to London or to go to London, my Lord had a purpose to entreat you to accompany him in these affairs. But even now (said Mrs. Vaux) there

came a traveller by, who is a kinsman to a man of mine, and told my man that he heard there were some garboyles at London, but what they were he could not tell, but as I remember she said it was one Mr. Markham's man who did travel towards Kettering that told her man of this news. And therefore (she said) she would respite my Lord going to London until a more peaceable time.

"When I perceived that her mind was altered, and that she was not purposed to send up my Lord, I wished that I had known her mind that I might have spared my journey, to the which she answered that she knew it not herself but a very little before, otherwise she would have eased me of that travel.

"She did not express what the broils were, and the words she used to me of them were at my first coming, in the presence of my Lord her son, her daughters and gentlewomen, with some others of her household standing by, which news she had heard from Mr. Markham's man, as I have before expressed.

"Young Mr. Huddlestone was in the house, and his wife, but I do not remember that Mr. Huddlestone was present at those speeches we had at the first when Mrs. Vaux told me of those broils, neither did I hear him speak anything of that matter for I was a mere stranger unto him. And I had no speech with him but in suppertime, and before I was risen in the morning Mr. Huddlestone was gone out of the house, so I spake with him no more.

"I did never hear of any such treason or traitors until it was about twelve of the clock the aforeasid Wednesday at night, at which time the news was brought me to Harrowden by my second son Robert Fermor who had heard by travellers at Towcester the same evening of the treason intended and discovered against the King's Majesty and the parliament house, and that some of the traitors had taken horses from Benock's stable at Warwick, but who the traitors were or any of their names, my son could not tell me.

"As I remember, upon the coming of my son to Harrowden, the news that he brought was presently carried to Mrs. Vaux and I could not gather that she had heard anything before of the treasons or of any broils in London more than (as I have before mentioned) was brought from Mr. Markham's man to a servant of hers."²²

According to this, Elizabeth heard on Wednesday afternoon that there were broils in London, but had no definite information of the Powder Plot till the news was brought at midnight by Robert Fermor. Therefore she could justify her statement that the first news she had of the *plot* came from Sir George Fermor. And she might have got away with this story had it not been for mistake number three. But here there was every excuse for her. She was trying to save her friends. Her mistake was one that Anne would not have made ; it was a hopeless misjudgment of character.

IV

There were with Elizabeth at Harrowden on 5 November besides Fr. Gerard, two other priests : Fr. Singleton who was known as Clifton, and Fr. Thomas Strange, S.J., who was known as Anderton. There were also young Henry Huddleston, who arrived that evening, and Fr. Strange's servant Matthew Batty, who was closely associated with the Jesuits, and may have been a lay brother. On the morning of Thursday, 7 November, they set out from Harrowden to try and reach Fr. Garnet at Coughton. As they approached Warwick they learned that there was no chance of passing through that town, so they turned off and made for Kenilworth, where they were all arrested that same evening. Sir Richard Verney, High Sheriff of Warwickshire, suspected that they were priests but had no proof by 12 November when he sent to Salisbury

"A Kalendar of the names of the persons apprehended within the said county, known and suspected for the late conspiracy and insurrection.

Henry Hurleston, son and heir
of Sir Edmund Hurleston
Thomas Anderton of Cleyton in
the countie of Lanc. gent.
John Clifton of Wesbie in the
same county of Lancashire, gent.

} suspected to be priests

Matthew Battie, late servant to
the Lord Monteagle

William Thornbury
John Sergeant
Stephen Bonde

} servants of Mr. Hudleston
aforenamed."²³

Now Sir Richard Verney was uncle to Sir George Simeon, who had married Elizabeth's daughter Mary Vaux in the previous year. Hearing of the capture of her friends, and presuming on this slight and recent kinship with Sir Richard Verney she wrote to him the following letter, on this same 12 November :

+

Ihs : Ma:

"Deer Sir as you haue often wisshed some fitt occaseion to shew your good will unto me, so now if it please you ther is that to be done w^{ch} maye exceedingly pleasure me & noe ways wronge or indaynger yourself for as I perceue by Sir Robertt Dormers men who came heather with your passe to my cosin Hurlstons wiffe [Dorothy, daughter of Sir Robert Dormer], ther are 4 men in comppany with her howssbond. he went hense with only 2 seruants & ther went that morninge from hense 2 other that wer to goe into Warkyshier, but they went some howars before him, but because his wiffe doth tell me he was also goinge into that country I feare lest they myght light in company by the waye & so be stayed, but good Sir if it prooue so, lett me as euar I shall expect you will doe me anye frendshipp release thes too gentellmen & ther seruant for the [young *struck out*] younger gentellman [Fr. Strange] your Neece Mary will rather geue you her portion than haue him come in question, for his estate adoe [I do] assure you it is & shalbe affter the death of his Mother 800^{li} ayear, & the very report that he wer stayed in this fashon would kill his Moother, whos only child he is, the other gentellman [Fr. Singleton] came only with him, & theyr apoyntment was to be heare agayne before Christmas. I will not now name them because [I heard *inserted*] they goe but as seruinge men, & under that nam you maye please to lett them haue your passe home into Lankyshier to theyr M^r howss & if ane man shall goe with them for theyr better passage he shalbe very well rewarded, & if you will please to lett eather this berar or anye come hether but to assure us they be gon with your passe your Neece Mary shall geue them half a dosen Aingells [an Angel was 10/-] of my pursse, & in doinge this you shall so sure bynd me & myne unto you that if euar it bye in my powar thowgh it be with the hassard of my [life *struck out*] estate I

will requite this kindnis. the presedent of your settinge free a man of the La Diggbes doth much increase my hope that you maye easely doe this without your oune preiudyse, & that you may the better know the men, the one which I cheffly respect [Fr. Strange] is of the years 7 or 8 & twenty a clear complexeion of browne heare & cutt somewhat neer, not much heare of his face. the other is A Red heare & a much Reder beard with much heare one both, thayr man [Batty] A very tall man of an A brown hear and beard about 40 years of age. what nams they geue them selfies I know not & therfore dooe not name them, but I assure my self this description is enouffe, & that you will deale worthely. if you pleas you maye aske them in priuat somthinge of this howss, & lett them know for my sake you release them by w^{ch} it maye be they will more disscouar them selues unto you. a word to a trew frend is enouff & therfore I will sease you farther troble & Rest your most assured

Eli ? ”

The signature has been erased, but the writing is undoubtedly Elizabeth's.

Then she took another sheet and wrote a sort of postscript :

“My cosin Hurlstons wife beinge hear doth request me to lett you know that last night she hard from London [from her father *inserted*] & her howssbonds nam is noe ways tuched, in which respect her earnest sute vnto you is that you would please to lett [her *struck out*] him be deliuerid unto the custody of the Lo: Leeffetenant & to goe upp to London [with him *inserted*] to shew him self wher shee doth hope ther wilbe nothings sayd unto him & that it is his safest cowrse. Shee is gret with child, & if this by your fauer maye be done it would ease her jorny to London which shee is very ill able to under take, & you shall bynd her to [haue *inserted*] a very thankfull harte towrds [you *inserted*], & other her frends in her behalf will haue the like. till I see you I will saye noe more, but if a man be sent as to tell my cosin Hurlston how you disspose of her howssband that shee maye determine her jorny towrd London accordingle, the same man maye bringe the other tidinges which I desire is such measure as you for euar bynd me unto you by it, & the man shalbe well rewarded.”

Elizabeth waited in vain for the assurances she had so ardently hoped for. She was sadly mistaken in her estimate of her "trew frend."

Sir Richard Verney received this letter on the following evening 13 November. He not only did not accede to her many requests but he wrote at the foot of it: "This letter was opened by myself and sealed again" and sent it straight up to Salisbury with the following covering letter:

"There is come to my hands even now this enclosed letter: although it be without name, yet it is sent from Mrs. Vaux, the Lord Vaux's mother. I hope I am not so unfortunate that you will easily think me inclinable or apt to be moved by such provocations as the acquaintance only that I had formerly with her as a gentlewoman, and this entreaty of hers at this time in a business of that consequence. For the men which she endeavours to describe to me in her letter I conceive them to go under the names of Thomas Anderton, John Clifton, William Thornberry and Matthew Batty, all taken in the company of Mr. Hurleston, and what opinion we conceived of them is expressed in the catalogue of their names that I sent by my last messenger. And of these men I will give an honest and safe account. For the inducement which she makes of the letting pass one of my Lady Digby's men, whom I conceive she intends to be a servant of Sir Everard Digby, either I am assured I was not present, or else it was before we had knowledge that Sir Everard Digby was one of the conspirators. I have even now received letters by Sir Robert Digby for the sending up all the persons in my custody attached [i.e. arrested] since this last rebellion. The number of them is such as may appear by the same catalogue, as I suppose upon your view of their names and qualities, I shall receive a more particular direction, which I hope will be returned to me as soon as I shall possibly be prepared of a company of fit men to conduct them. In great haste
Warwick Nov. 13th at 9 o'clock at night."

Salisbury has endorsed this, for reasons best known to himself:

"L. Vaux at Mrs. Grantz
14 horses by [Singleton *erased*] Gerret Ogle."²⁵

This was bad enough, but what made it worse was that the parties concerned had not agreed to tell the same story. The prisoners were, of course, kept separate from the moment of their arrest and had no idea what the others had said. It was essential that their depositions should be consistent, but this was far from being the case. Here is Henry Huddleston's examination taken before Sir Richard Verney and others on 8 November, the day after his arrest :

"He saith that for the space of eight weeks past he, with his family, have been resident at Attleborow [Irthlingborough] a house of the Lord Vaux in Northamptonshire, and in this space he himself was very little at home, but when he was, there resorted no other company to his house than sometime the Lord Vaux and Sir George Simonde [Simeon] his [i.e. Vaux's] brother-in-law and some other of that family. That about Tuesday was fortnight [22 October] he went toward Cambridgeshire to his father's [Sawston Hall which was then being built] and from there to Royston to the hunting [with the King], whither he went on Tuesday, [22 Oct.] at night and stayed there Wednesday, and on Thursday to London having no other in his company than William Thornbury his man, and there he lodged in the Savoy at one Mrs. Douglas' house : there he continued from that Thursday till Monday last [4 Nov.] at which time he came from London about four of the clock in the evening and he with his man Thornbury only came to St. Albans to bed to the sign of the Bull, where he found Sir Francis Fortescue. The next morning he went to Harrowden to the Lord Vaux where he found no other company than his mother and her household. On Wednesday morning [6 Nov.] about nine of the clock he went to his own house at Attleborow where he found no other company but his wife, and that day himself with his wife came back to Harrowden. And on Thursday [7th] leaving his wife at Harrowden he went to his own house where he met Mr. Anderton and Mr. Clifton who as he thinketh did lodge at his house that Wednesday night. And his this examine intending to go to Farrington to a house of his father's in Lancashire they all together set forward on their journey meaning to lodge that night at Warwick, but that he heard

there was busyness and stir there, and then purposed to lie at Grove Park a mile [3 modern miles west] from the town.

"He saith that he is familiarly acquainted with Mr. Clifton, but Mr. Anderton he hath not seen this half year till Thursday morning. He hath known Mr. Anderton to be a gentleman-like man using the tennis court and sometime having music in his lodging, which was accustomed to be about Gray's Inn, of which Inn of Court he doth not know. That Anderton hath been beyond the seas. The first news that he heard of this practice at London was from Sir George Fermor who came on Wednesday to Harrowden and there reported it. He saith he hath no knowledge of Matthew Batty other than that he came with Mr. Clifton.

"He now upon further examination saith that in St. Albans John Wright came, and presently after Mr. Robin Catesby overtook him upon Tuesday morning and they rode in company to Dunstable where Mr. Catesby's horse cast a shoe, and there this examine stayed with him till his horse was shod, Mr. Wright riding on before to Brickhill where this examine and Mr. Catesby overtook him and there they 'bayted' [fed] together staying there some hour, whither came riding in two gentlemen, the one he knew to be one Percy to whom Mr. Catesby went down and spake with him, in whose company Mr. Catesby and Mr. Wright went presently away saying they would lie at Towcester that night."²⁶

In other words, on the day Huddleston came to Harrowden he had been riding with four of the conspirators. And there is no question of meeting by chance with the two Jesuits: they all set out together on that Thursday morning.

Matthew Batty, the very tall servant of Father Strange *alias* Anderton, was examined by Sir Richard Verney on 9 November. He said he was born at Tunstal (Lancs.) and had served Lord Monteagle.

"On Tuesday night and Wednesday night last [5 and 6 Nov.] this examine did lie at Harrowden in an alehouse, the keeper thereof Patrick Kent, and on Thursday morning he met with Mr. Clifton on the way between Harrowden and Wellingborough and one Anderton is his company, and about eight

of the clock on Thursday morning they met at a crossway with Mr. Henry Huddlestone and two of his servants about a mile on this side Wellingborough and so came in company until they came unto the Blackmills near Warwick, proposing to have come to Grove Park through Warwick, but hearing that there was no passage through Warwick, went to Kenilworth where they were taken.

"He never did know Mr. Huddlestone before his meeting, nor Anderton. Mr. Clifton he hath known two or three years. He was not at London these fifteen or sixteen days. He confesseth he useth not to come to Church nor hath been there he cannot tell when nor will not come to church. Being asked if the Pope should send hither an army to set up again the popish religion, whether he this examine would take part with the King's Majesty against the Pope, prayeth to be spared for answering this question."²⁷

Matthew Batty's topography is not very clear, but it seems that the alehouse was in Little Harrowden, which, then as now, was the larger village. He met the two Jesuits, coming from Irthlingborough, "on the way between [Little] Harrowden and Wellingborough." This would be where the road from Little Harrowden meets the main Kettering road, or just outside Harrowden Hall. He met Mr. Huddlestone, also coming from Irthlingborough "at a crossway" about a mile this side (i.e. north) of Wellingborough. This is probably the crossroad further north where the main road meets the road from Burton Latimer. This is three miles from Wellingborough, but the estimate of distances in the seventeenth century was extremely vague, and we have just seen that Grove Park is stated to be a mile from Warwick whereas it is three miles. But the matter is not very important as Batty was not telling the truth.

Naturally when the authorities understood that Henry Huddlestone had ridden most of the day with four of the conspirators on the famous fifth of November, they were curious to know more. A further examination took place on 6 December. The extant copy is in the handwriting of Popham, and is headed "At Sergeant's Inn." But Huddlestone was by this time in the Tower, and the confession is countersigned by William Waad, Lieutenant of the Tower. This and the fact that Huddlestone

is so much more communicative give the uneasy impression that torture was used. As we shall see, torture was not officially sanctioned (except for Guy Fawkes) till 19 February, but there seems little doubt it was used much earlier. Salisbury himself admits this. In a letter written on 4 December two days before this examination he says : "Most of the prisoners have wilfully forsworn that the priests knew anything in particular, and obstinately refuse to be accusers of them, yea, what torture soever they be put to."²⁸

"At Serjeant's Inn, Dec. 6, 1605, The examination of Henry Huddleston, *alias* Hurleston, Esq.

"He confesseth that he took a house of Mrs. Vaux at Attleborrow, within three miles of Mrs. Vaux soon after Bartlemytide [24 Aug.] last, holding the same at will, brought his wife thither, and having the house without any grounds, there was no agreement for payment of any rent, and this examine with his servant Thornborough [or Thornbury], and no other came up to London a week before Hallowtide and lay at the Savoy at one Mrs. Douglas' house, and saith that he came up for the alteration of certain of his father's bonds, by his father's appointment, and on Monday morning the 5 of November [*sic* for 4th] last, he met with Robert Catesby, Thomas Winter and John Wright at Purnny's house behind St. Clement's, and came thither for his cloak and other things to be conveyed to his house, and had no conference with them, but only words of salutations. And saith that about 8 of the clock on that Monday he with his man T. and no other, rode out of town and went to St. Albans that night, and supped there alone ; and the next morning, before they came at the water in St. Albans, Catesby overtook him, and soon after John Wright, and so they rode together without any other in their company until they came to Brickhill which is about 17 miles, and saith that by the way they had no conference concerning any accident at London. And about one of the clock in the afternoon they and one other more, whose face he saw not, came in soon after ; they had not dined, but Percy and the other lighted not from their horses : and Catesby, after saluting Percy, bade this examine go home to his wife.

“And examine rode to Mrs. Vaux’s in that day, and came thither about 5 of the clock in the afternoon. And saith that there was no appointment between this examine, Catesby, or any of other, to meet again at any place. And saith that he had no other speech with Mrs. Vaux then but only of the said Percy and other the said company and of their sudden riding away, and that Percy and Catesby bade him get him home to his wife.

“Being demanded whether Gerard the Jesuit, calling himself Brooke, was in the house of Mrs. Vaux when he came thither, confesseth that he saw him there, and there were also at that time Mr. Singleton, calling himself John Clifton and Strange, of the Society of the Jesuits, calling himself Anderton; and saith that he saw Darcy [Garnet] the priest at Mrs. Vaux’s, when Sir Everard Digby was there about a fortnight before Michaelmas [i.e. about 15 Sept.]; and at that time he saw Pierce [Percy], a priest, calling himself Fisher: there was also Greenway the Jesuit. And there was there also Mr. Catesby at that time, and Greenway rode away with Mr. Catesby at that time.

“He denieth that either Strange or Singleton were in his company either at his being at London or after he came from thence. And confesseth that they—Mrs. Vaux, this examine, Gerard, Singleton and Strange—supped together on Tuesday at night.

“And saith that on Wednesday he rode for his wife and brought her to Mrs. Vaux’s. Being demanded of whom at Mrs. Vaux’s he heard of the broils at London, answereth that he heard it of Mrs. Vaux herself, who said she heard it of Sir George Fermor. And saith that whilst Sir Geo. Fermor was there the said priests kept themselves secret. And saith that by Thursday morning this examine, Strange, Singleton and Batley [Batty] took their horses, and intended to Grove Park, and coming within two miles of Warwick they heard of the troubles at Warwick, and found the gates of the town were shut, and thereupon they altered their journey and rode to Kenilworth, where they were apprehended.

“Being demanded whether Strange, Singleton and this examine agreed over night or the day before that they would ride together the next day, confesseth that Singleton and he

had conference together over night to ride up to Lancashire. And saith that two of his servants and Thornborough rode with him, and this examine told his wife that if his horse-keeper had been there he should have gone with him to Farrington [Faringdon Hall, near Preston] in Lancashire. And denieth that he had any speech with Mrs. Vaux concerning his journey, and saith that he meant to have returned in about 10 or 12 days.”²⁹

On the same day, and evidently at the same place, Fr. Thomas Strange was examined. He proved obstinate.

“Being demanded what day he rode out of London and in what company, he said first that he rode forth upon Wednesday the 6 of November last in the company of Mr. Huddleston and his two men and Clifton, and the men that was taken with him [Batty], and after he had been confronted with the said Mr. Huddleston and Clifton, he said he was not in London nor in the suburbs in three weeks before and that no man went out of London with him.

“Being demanded who supped in company with him at supper at Mrs. Vaux’s upon Tuesday the 5th of November last, desireth to be spared of such questions.

“And being demanded who rode forth with him from Mrs. Vaux’s upon Wednesday the 6th of November last [it was Thursday 7th when they set out] desireth to be pardoned [i.e. excused from answering]. And being demanded whither he rode, saith he rode into Warwickshire; being demanded to what places, refuseth to answer.”³⁰

It is not to be wondered at if Popham and Salisbury were not altogether satisfied with these inconsistent accounts, or if they suspected that it was Henry Huddlestone who brought the news of the discovery of the plot to Harrowden Hall. But it was not till four months later, when they had somewhat broken the spirit of Fr. Strange, by repeated and brutal racking that left him a permanent invalid, that they wrung from him a confession of the truth.

On 13 March, 1606, Fr. Strange wrote a declaration, which exists in his own handwriting:

“Mr. Henry Huddlestone brought the first news that ever

I heard of the blowing up of the parliament house, to Harrowden, the 4th, as I remember of November last [surely the 5th], in the hearing of Mr. Jarret [Fr. Gerard] Mr. Singleton and myself, where hence Mr. Huddlestone, Mr. Singleton and myself, with three serving-men, two of them Mr. Huddlestone's men, the other I know not, departed some day or two after . . . This I assure my honourable lords was the first news I ever heard of this last treason. I humbly desire your lordships to be favourable unto me."³¹

It is not difficult to reconstruct the scene. Huddlestone rode at least from St. Albans with the conspirators, left them at Brickhill, and raced to Harrowden with the news. There would be a hurried consultation, in which it was decided to send next morning to Sir George Fermor, as though nothing had happened to ruffle their serenity or to interfere with their plans for the coming betrothal of the young Lord Vaux. It was a clumsy and ill-advised artifice, and although by 10 November Salisbury had not as much evidence as has now been put before the reader, he had enough to make him suspicious of Elizabeth Vaux, and sent orders to William Tate of Delapré to search Harrowden Hall for Father John Gerard.

CHAPTER IX

HARROWDEN HALL

I

LITTLE John's hiding-holes at Harrowden Hall, had, as we have seen, won fame as far away as Warwickshire, but their efficiency had never once been put to the test. They were evidently considered pursuivant-proof. They were adequate defence against the normal, routine priest-hunts, that seldom lasted more than a few hours. But no hiding-holes devised by the wit of man could hope to withstand the assault to which this great citadel was now to be subjected. For this was no casual, half-hearted raid, but a carefully planned attack carried out by more than a hundred well-armed, determined men, roused to indignation by the Powder Plot.

It is now that Elizabeth Vaux is seen at her best. The first shock had led her into several indiscretions, but now she is her true self and mistress of the situation. One false step, one incautious word, one frightened look or gesture, and all would be lost. The situation demanded a cool head and an almost preternatural composure. Elizabeth was equal to the task, and so was her son, who, it must be remembered was only just seventeen. They were both calm and even co-operative. They had nothing to hide!

On 13 November, William Tate wrote to the Earl of Salisbury :

"I have used all possible expedition for my repair to Mrs. Vaux her house at Harrowden, whither I came with as much secrecy as could be on Tuesday the 12 of this instant month, between twelve and one of the clock of the same day, accompanied with Sir Richard Chetwode, Sir William Samwell, and Sir Robert Hartwell, knights, all remote from the place of her abode, and none knowing to what end they were sent for till we met at my house [Delapré, near Northampton]. And at our approach to the gates, having first set a guard about the house to prevent all escapes, we encountered the Lord

CHAPTER II
THE WOODS OF HALL

LETTER FROM THE LORD OF THE MANSION, HALL, 1840
I have just received your letter of the 10th inst. and am
glad to hear that you are still in the land of the living.
I have been thinking of you very much lately, and
wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are
well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but
I have managed to find some time to write to you.
I have been thinking of you very much lately, and
wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are
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I have managed to find some time to write to you.

Yours truly,
The Lord of the Mansion, Hall, 1840

Vaux returning out of the town, with whom we presently entered, making no stay in any place until we came unto his mother whom we found retired in her chamber through some indisposition of health : and after a general notice given her of your Lordship's commandment I required the keys of her closet, cabinet, trunks, coffers and back doors of her lodging, which without any delay she delivered unto me, whereof when I was possessed, and had secured those places, I did immediately call for all the servants, whom we had speedily gathered together, and taking every of them, and a note of their names, we disposed ourselves to a very exact search, leaving some to observe Mrs. Vaux and those of whom we had no employment. And as we passed through every room, we shut up the doors fast and kept the keys which I yet retain, not admitting anyone to use them without some servant of mine own to accompany them. And after we had thus proceeded, having left no place unsought, outwards or inwards, we returned to Mrs. Vaux her closet, where we applied ourselves with vigilant eyes to discover some matter of moment for the service. But having perused the reserved and treasured papers we found nothing that in any point did concern this last occasion.

"Then I ransacked the coffers of linen, trunks of apparel, the young Lord's lodging and his evidence house, to which he very honourably gave passage, and in all things disposed himself to expedite the service, that he might stand justified from all imputation.

"And when I perceived no success followed in this design, Sir Richard Chetwode and I attempted the Lord by private discourse to evince something of circumstance, and treated with him by persuasion, nobly to discover what he knew in this late intended treason, which course I did afterwards pursue with the mother, who both seemed to express vehement detestation of the treason and [of] complicity therein.

"There is neither armour nor stranger in the house. Sir Everard Digby's Lady would in her return out of Warwickshire on Monday last (as we hear) have entreated a lodging for one night, and could not prevail.

"I do keep a very sufficient watch about the house night and day, so that no man can enter or issue forth, without our knowledge. Thus having performed to relate at large our

progress in this service commanded unto, I do attend your Lordship's further pleasure etc. Nov. 13, Harrowden."¹

Fr. Gerard says :

"The house was beset with at least a hundred men and those well appointed. The young Lord made no resistance, as having no cause to fear, but brought the Commissioners presently in to his mother, who delivered unto them all the keys of her house, and willed them to use their pleasure. They searched for two or three days continually, and searched with candles in cellars and several dark corners. They searched every cabinet and box in her own closet for letters, in hope to find some little scroll that might show Father Gerard had been an actor in this treason, or that she or her son had received some knowledge of it. But they found not with all this diligence the least tittle of advantage in the matter, insomuch that the chief man in commission for this search (though an earnest Puritan) yet sent a very full information unto the Council that he had found the house most clear, the young Lord and his mother very respective unto authority, admitting any kind of search or inquiry that he could desire, and yet very confident in their own innocency : and that he found not any preparation in the house for war, or any show at all that they had the least knowledge of any such attempt intended."²

One wonders how Gerard learned the contents of William Tate's letter.

Gerard also informs us that the house at Irthlingborough was beset in the same way and at the same time, but there seems to be no official account of it. William Tate enclosed in his letter the depositions of two men whom he had personally examined. One was Patrick Kent of Harrowden, innholder,

"who saith that on Tuesday the 5th of this instant month one Matthew Batty, late servant, as he affirmed to the Lord Montegle came to his house from London whither he attended upon his Lady, and lay there that night and Wednesday at night and departed from thence on Thursday morning following to Rushton to return back again into Lancashire. And that on Wednesday about 7 of the clock in the evening he told this examinee, his host, that he must go to Kettering to deliver

some things to the carrier to be sent down into Lancashire, but what they were he knoweth not, neither did he enquire of him to understand, and he returned thence again about 12 or one of the clock of the same, and departed thence the next morning.”⁸

There is nothing in this inconsistent with Batty’s own account given in the last chapter. But his journey to Kettering and back on the Wednesday evening (which took him five or six hours) is interesting. Still more interesting is what he delivered to the carrier, on which the next examination throws some light :

“The Examination of Francis Swetnam, baker to Mrs. Vaux, taken before William Tate Esq. one of the Justices of the Peace etc.

“This examine saith that on Tuesday the 5th of this November, about 6 of the clock in the evening, he went to Wellingborough at the entreaty of one Matthew, who told this examine that he was a Lancashire man and served the Lord Monteagle, which said Matthew bought of one James Ball, a mercer dwelling in Wellingborough about 20lbs. of gunpowder which this examine thinketh he carried the same night to Kettering to send down into Lancashire by a carrier that lay there. And he would likewise have had this examine’s company thither, but he refused to go with him.

“And he saith further that he knoweth not his surname nor ever saw him before this time nor since. He is a man of good stature and well set, having a full face and a little high colour and a short beard, but of what colour he does not well remember. And he lay in the town four or five nights before and resorted to his Mistress her house divers times.

“And being further demanded whether he had any speech with him concerning the use he had for this powder, he saith that the said Mr. Matthew told him that it was dear in their country, and that he could make gain thereof if he would sell it, but he purposed to reserve the same in part for his own use and other part to bestow amongst his friends.”⁴

But Matthew Batty had confessed that he did “buy a barrel of gunpowder, which he left with Francis, Mrs. Vaux her man.”⁵

The mention of gunpowder must have encouraged William Tate to continue the search with renewed zest, and on this same 13 November his vigilance was rewarded.

II

Besides Frs. Strange and Singleton, there had been at Harrowden when the news of the plot arrived a secular priest named Thomas Laithwood or Laithwaite. He too had set out to try to reach Fr. Garnet, but he did not travel with the others. Like them, he was apprehended.

"His captors" says Fr. Gerard, "took him to an inn, intending to bring him up for examination and committal the next day. On entering the inn he took off his cloak and sword and laid them on a bench : then on pretence of looking after his horse and getting it taken to water, he went to the stable, and as there was a stream near the house, he bade the boy lead the horse thither at once, and himself went along also. When they had come to the stream and the horse was drinking, he said to the lad, 'Go, get ready the hay, and the straw for his bed, and I will bring him back when he has drunk.' The boy returned to the stable without further thought, and he mounting his horse spurred him into the stream, and swam him to the opposite bank. Those in the inn, seeing his cloak and sword still lying there, had for some time no suspicion of his stratagem, but hearing from the stable-boy what had happened, they saw they had been outwitted, and immediately set off in pursuit. They were however too late, for the fugitive knowing the way well, got to the house of a Catholic before night and lay there for some days. Then, finding that he could not get to Father Garnet, and thinking all danger had passed in our direction, he tried to return to me."⁶

And by the devil's own luck he rode straight into the cordon that William Tate had thrown round Harrowden and so became a prisoner once more.

This was indeed mere chance, but doubtless a little comfort to the searchers after their long, fruitless search of Harrowden Hall. But by Thursday evening, the 14th and the third day of the search, William Tate felt he was getting warmer. He wrote to Salisbury next day :

"Remaining unsatisfied with my unprofitable endeavours in the former search, on Thursday towards the evening I renewed it with my servants, and approaching near to the place where

this hidden serpent should seem to lurk, though there were no appearance to give the least suspicion, I insisted long upon that part of the house, upon intimation given that there was a secret receptacle in the roof of the same. I examined every corner there, and was resolved to have broken open some part of the wall. Yet before proceeding so far I required Richard Richardson, a servant of Mrs. Vaux, then present, to deal truly with me; who after some debate opened the door, whereat I entered and searched the same, and found it the most secret place that ever I saw, and so contrived that it was without all possibility to be discovered. There I found many popish books and other things incident to their superstitious religion: but no man in it. I am assured none could evade out thence after I entered the house, having guarded it day and night about and within, myself and servants keeping the keys of all the doors.

“For better caution I commanded a strong watch to be kept day and night throughout all the country adjacent, and no man suffered to pass unless he were very well known to them, but that he should be brought to me or some other Justice. By this occasion, many being stayed, one John Laithwoode was brought to me, whose examination I enclose, praying for further direction concerning him, whom I yet restrain. At his first examination he was insufferably insolent, but on the morrow he became a better tempered spirit. These priests and Jesuits, masking under other habits, make me jealous of any unknown to me professing themselves Catholics. Harrowden Nov. 15.”

The reader may like to see, from the examinations which he enclosed, what Tate meant by “insufferably insolent.”

“The examination of John Lathwood of Wigan in the county of Lancashire, gentleman, taken the 13 day of November

“First being examined saith that he travelleth from London and that he came from thence upon Tuesday last, being the 12th of the month, and lay the same night at the George in Dunstable, and so came from thence through Harrowden intending to go to Kettering towards Lancashire, if he had not been stayed.

“And being asked whether he would go to the Church now

established by the laws of England, saith that he is a Catholic and will not go to Church : and being asked whether he will swear to the supremacy, saith he will not, and that I had no authority to ask him such questions (as he thought). And further said that, seeing I went to those points with him, he did profess himself a Catholic and cared not for me.

“And having read and perused this same, affirming it to be true, refused notwithstanding to set his hand.”⁸

But on Wednesday he was a better tempered spirit.

“Being re-examined saith that when he is in Lancashire he remaineth at his eldest brother’s house in the parish of Wigan where he was born, and where he hath for the most part of his life (being about 28 years of age) been continually resident. And he was brought up at school there, and in Holland in the county of Lancashire, having never been at either of the universities, nor at any of the Inns of Court, nor out of England : neither hath he ever been at church, nor will at any time resort to the Church established by the laws of England, which he thinketh not to be the true Church.”⁹

But he still does not sign his name, to this frank avowal of the truth—or part of it.

Before William Tate sent off his letter with these two enclosures he received one from Salisbury, and added a postscript to his own :

“P.S. After these letters were written I received your directions to repair up to you with Mrs. Vaux in my company, which shall be performed, and on Saturday the 16th we will take our journey towards London. I beseech you I may understand how and where I shall dispose of her at my coming up, she having no lodging provided of her own. The Lord Vaux will likewise make his repair forthwith.”

All day Friday the search went on, and on Saturday or Sunday Tate set out for London with Elizabeth Vaux as his prisoner. They got to St. Albans by Monday, whence he sent this note ahead of him to Salisbury :

Being ill accommodated of coach and horses for so sudden a journey, which I have supplied as time and place would permit,

our travel is become slow and troublesome. Nevertheless I doubt not but I shall bring Mrs. Vaux to London this night. That I may understand your pleasure how she shall be disposed of when she comes to her lodging, and what further service I shall be commanded, I have dispatched this messenger—St. Albans. 18 Nov. 1605.”¹⁰

They reached London that night and Elizabeth was examined immediately :

“The examination of Elizabeth Vaux, taken this 18 of November, 1605.

“Being demanded whether she knoweth Gerard the priest. Answereth that she knoweth him not.

“Being demanded when she saw Mr. Catesby last. Answereth about 6 or 8 weeks last in her house with Sir Everard Digby, before whom Catesby came in and left him there. And saith that in Mr. Catesby’s company there came in one who was called *Green*, and a day or two before there came in company with certain gentlemen one called *Darcey* [Garnet].

“She confesseth that Henry Huddleston, son and heir apparent of Sir Edmund came to her house with his wife on Tuesday and lay there Tuesday at night and tarried there all Wednesday. And went away on Thursday morning leaving his wife behind him.

“She saith that she heard not of the broils at London till Wednesday at night after the attempt should have been done. And then Sir George Fermor and his lady coming thither by *accident* told *her of it*, who spake not of any recusant papist, but that the rumour at Torchester [Towcester] was that some scottish men should have done it.

“She saith that on the same Wednesday there came about the evening a servant of Sir Griffin Markham’s brother who told to this examinee’s servant called Christopher [Parker] the embroider that there were stirs at London, but tarried not, but presently departed.

“She confesseth that about Easter last she wrote a letter to the Lady Wenman and remembereth not the certain contents of the letter, but that these words, *That Totnam would turn French* she remembereth came in it.

“And saith that Sir George Fermor and his Lady Fermor

told her that the Lady Tasborough said that there was treason in the letter, whereat this examine smiled, and coming into Oxfordshire since, the Lady Wenman told her that she kept the letter safely for both their discharges.

"She denieth that she sent for Sir George Fermor on the said Wednesday, but he came there by accident as is aforesaid.

"She confesseth that Henry Huddleston told her that Robert Catesby overtaking him on the way from London desired him to stay, and after came Percy with others and whispered with Catesby and saith that Catesby and all the rest posted to their horse, and Catesby said to Huddleston, 'haste thou home.' Whereupon Huddleston apprehended that all was not well, and saith that Huddleston did much repent that he had not asked Catesby the reason of his speech to him."¹¹

This is signed "Eliza Vaux" but there is nothing to show who were her examiners. In another copy,¹² annotated by Coke the words given in italics above are underlined, evidently by Coke himself. But it is evident that Salisbury was not present, for on 3 December, Coke writes to him :

"I send you a copy of Mrs. Vaux's confession which you never saw, together with such postilles upon the examinations of Sir George Fermor and Sir Richard Wenman and of the Lady Tasborough as be pertinent to this cause."¹³ The "postilles"¹⁴ add nothing to our knowledge.

The disposal of Elizabeth had been already decided upon, for on 16 Nov. the Privy Council sent

"several letters of one tenor to diverse Aldermen to receive into their houses the wives and kinswomen of the traitors who it was not thought fit to commit to prisons."

There follows a list of nine women, Dorothy wife of John Grant, Elizabeth wife of William Cole, Mary wife of Henry Morgan, Martha wife of Thomas Percy, Dorothy, wife of John Wright, Margaret wife of Christopher Wright, Mrs. Rookwood, wife of Ambrose Rookwood, Mrs. Key, wife of Robert Key, and Mrs. Vaux. Thus Elizabeth finds herself with the wives of seven of the conspirators. The custodian to whose house she was sent was Sir John Swinnerton.¹⁵

Before many days had passed, as Father Gerard records :

“The Council sent for the young Lord and his mother up to London presently, where they were both examined ; the young Lord by my Lord Salisbury alone, who cleared himself so by his answer that he was no further restrained, but only commanded to stay in the city of London. His mother was examined before the whole Council, where she did clear herself fully from all cause of suspicion in that treason, and affirmed constantly, that although she were a firm Catholic, and so would live and die by the grace of God, yet that fact [the Powder Plot] she did as much mislike and condemn as themselves ; and that so she had been taught by those that had care of her soul.

“They urged her that she knew Father Gerard and had received him many times in her house. She answered she hoped none could justly accuse her that she had received either him or any other priest, and that she would not accuse herself, the same being a penal law. They insisted she was bound to tell of him, for that he was known to be a traitor and a chief plotter of this action. She answered with serious protestation that she had never the least cause to think so of him (if she did know him, as they presupposed) ; and said that she had heard so much good of the man (though she did not know him) that she would pawn her whole estate, yea, and her life also, that he was not guilty of that Plot, nor justly to be touched with it.

“Then the Council produced a letter which she had written unto the Sheriff of Warwickshire, her cousin, for the delivery of two priests, who were taken passing through the country after the stirs were begun, which letter the sheriff had sent unto the Council (more like a Puritan as he is, than a kinsman as he should be). This letter, said the Lords of the Council, being written for the delivery of Strange, the Jesuit . . . and another priest, one of Blackwell the Archpriest [the superior of the secular clergy] his assistants, and the same also written in so earnest and effectual manner, doth convince you to be guilty of treason in that Statute of aiding priests. She answered that she wrote for them indeed, and that she desired much to set them free, but she knew them not to be priests, but took them for Catholic gentlemen that came sometimes to the house, as others did, and looked nothing like priests.

"Then finally, some of the Council said that, whereas she was now in the King's mercy to live or die, she should have her life and lose nothing of her estate, if she would tell where Gerard the Jesuit was to be found. She answered, she knew not; but if she did know she would not tell it to save her life and many lives.

" 'Why then,' said they, 'Lady, you must die.'

" 'Why then, I will die, my Lords,' said she, 'for I will never do the other.'"¹⁶

"Then rose one of the lords who had been a former friend of hers [probably the Earl of Northampton], to accompany her to the door out of courtesy, and on the way he said to her persuasively :"

" 'Have pity on yourself and on your children, and say what is required of you, or otherwise you will certainly die.'

"To which she answered in a loud voice :

" 'Then, my Lord, I will die.'

"This was said when the door had been opened, so that her servants who were waiting for her heard what she said, and all burst into weeping. But the Council only said this to terrify her, for they did not commit her to prison, but sent her to the house of a certain gentleman in the city, where she was well respected and yet kept so close that not her own son might come to see her, only she had a gentlewoman of her own to attend her."¹⁷

"There were also divers of her servants committed to several prisons, and often and strictly examined with many menacings if they would not confess Father Gerard to have been at the Lord Vaux his house, but nothing could be wrung out of them."¹⁸

Two of these examinations have survived.

"The examination of Francis Swetnam, servant to Mrs. Elizabeth Vaux, and served her in the bakehouse, taken the third of December, 1605.

"Saith that he hath been a recusant these two years, but will now come to the Church, for that he had rather adventure his own soul, than loosen his five children, but cannot give any reason why he should adventure his soul by coming to Church.

"Saith that he was taken in his mistress' house and brought up with her to London, but denieth that he was ever at any Mass, or that he knoweth any priest, and cannot deliver any other material thing to be set down."¹⁹

He might, however, have remembered that he had a son a Jesuit.

"The examination of Richard Richardson, butler to Mrs. Vaux. (6 Dec. 1605).

"He saith he hath served his mistress about six years, and hath not come to Church since he was eleven years old.

"Saith that since Midsummer last Catesby was at Harrowden only one time, which was about St. Luke's day [18 Oct.]; and that Sir Everard Digby was there only twice, the former about 6th of August and the latter about St. Luke's day; and that Francis Tresham was not there this twelvemonth; Mr. Rookwood these three years; and that Winter, Grant, Percy, Morgan, were never there during his service.

"And for matter of Faith and revealing of priests or Masses, he desireth to be spared, because it concerneth his soul."²⁰

Both these examinations are witnessed by (among others) Francis Bacon.

The search at Harrowden did not cease with the departure of William Tate for London.

"The house in the country," Fr. Gerard relates, "was all this while watched within and without for nine or ten days together, that if Father Gerard were still in the house hid in any secret place, he either might be starved to death, or by famine forced to come out. And for two or three miles round about the house there was watch kept in the country, and all passengers examined in desire to find the said Father, but all in vain; for where God will protect, man's forces or policies are frustrate, '*et deficient scrutantes scrutinio.*' [And searching they shall fail in their search Ps. 63].

"Soon after this search was past, Fr. Gerard lying secretly in another county, and understanding how that house had been severely searched for him as for one of this conspiracy, he thought it fit and needful to show his innocency in the matter by a public letter."²¹

These two paragraphs are from Fr. Gerard's *Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot*, which was written for immediate publication while the subject was still hot. It was not, in fact, published till modern times, but it betrays all the caution that was then so necessary and his determination not to bring any of his friends into further trouble by helping Salisbury's secret service. It is only when we turn to his Autobiography which he had no intention of publishing, that we get the whole story.

"Immediately the news reached us of such a plot having been discovered, and we learnt that certain of our friends had been killed and others taken, expecting that in such a season we too should have something to suffer, we had made all snug before they came, so that they found nothing. They continued searching, however, for many days, till at last my hostess discovered to the Justice in chief command one of the hiding-places in which a few books had been stowed away, thinking that he would then desist from searching any further, under the impression that if a priest had been in the house he would have been hidden there, yet they continued in the house for full nine days.

"And I, meanwhile, remained shut up in a hole where I could sit, but not stand upright. This time, however, I did not suffer from hunger, for every night food was brought to me secretly; nay, after four or five days, when the rigour of the search was somewhat relaxed, my friends even took me out at night and warmed me at a fire, for it was wintry weather, just before Christmastide. And when nine days had passed the searching party withdrew, believing it impossible I could be there so long without being discovered."²²

The lame little lay-brother had outwitted a hundred men.

III

William Tate, in his first report to Salisbury, says there was neither armour nor stranger in the house. It would appear that Elizabeth had cleared the decks for action by sending Dorothy Huddleston, then great with child, to some less suspected house. If she went to the Vaux residence at Irthlingborough she must have had just as exciting a time, for it was invested in the same manner as Harrowden. From wherever it was she hid, Dorothy

Huddlestone wrote to Salisbury a letter which is undated, but must be later than 12 November when her husband was still detained at Warwick :

"May it please your good Lordship in your wonted pity to have consideration of my most miserable and grievous case. My husband lies close prisoner in the Marshalsea, for whom the time makes both me and all other his friends fearful to be suitors.

"Yet, right honourable, my present distress, being great with child, and the misery of my poor children doth enforce me (beyond duty) to become a petitioner to your good Lordship by these few lines. And do most humbly beseech your honour, even on the knees of my heart, that if the quality or condition of his offence be no greater than I hope it will fall out to be, you will vouchsafe to be favourable unto him. And to be pleased to give me leave that I may become a suitor for him. And also that I may have access unto him to advise with him for the relief to sustain the present wants of myself and my poor comfortless infants who will to our last breath pray to God for your Lordship's happiness.

"So I most humbly crave pardon for this over-bold presumption, Your Lordship's most distressed suppliant Dorothy Huddilston."²³

Salisbury's reply was to send Huddlestone to the Tower. Sir Philip Gawdy wrote on 26 November :

"Mr Lord Stourton, and my cousin Hurlston were committed to the Tower—two silly men God knows."²⁴ Stourton was committed on 22 November.²⁵

Mary, wife of Sir Everard Digby, also petitioned Salisbury. Indeed she wrote several times. The later letters have been already published in the life of her husband.²⁶ There is an earlier one, dated 3 December, which gives us a lively picture of how the local authorities cashed in on a suspected traitor. I have omitted a first paragraph of conventional flattery, beseeching Salisbury's favour in her unspeakable sorrows.

"I know well my husband's offence hath forfeited all he was sole master of, but I cannot think it is the wills of those who

are guided by reason and to whom I now appeal, that I should be so violently dealt with as I am (my innocence and former estate considered). I make bold to send you up a note which at this instant comes unto my hands from an honest and sufficient gentleman that dwells by our house in Buckinghamshire which can give true information in what fashion the high sheriff of that shire hath proceeded in. He hath not left the worth of one penny belonging to the grounds, house, or within the walls; not so much as great tables and standing chests, that could not be removed without sawing and cutting a-pieces. He permitted base people to ransack all, so much as my closet, and left not any trifle in it, sold cattle and grain and other things to some for half the worth, gave away divers things freely, not only of ours but of our servants that was not there nor yet in the action, to their undoing. He dealt in all things there as though they were absolutely his. It is said by those of sufficiency which see his dealings, and by this gentleman for one, which sent me this note, that he will get about a thousand pounds under hand by this booty. He will not let me have so much as a suit of apparel for Mr. Digby nor linens for my present wearing about my body. I am wholly destitute of a place for me and my children to abide in, and of any kind of maintenance. I therefore beseech your Lordship's favour that I might have that house in Buckinghamshire, it being my own inheritance, and some competent allowance for my husband during his imprisonment, myself and children and some small family, and that the household stuff might be brought again that that which should be thought too much for my now present poor estate, I might procure some friends of mine to buy for me or mine hereafter.

"But, my Lord, though I have been tedious in these affairs and suits to your Lordship, yet are they far below the principal of my desires which is, and ever shall be howsoever, the life of my husband, which to obtain no condition shall be too hard to me though I beg whilst I live, or might give my life for his presently, without which my life will be much worse to me than many deaths. Therefore, honourable Lord, let me beg at your hands consent in yourself, and to mollify if it may be our Sovereign's heart to extend his mercy to sorrowful souls in giving pardon to him, whom I know will be most

true and loyal to him for ever hereafter. Thus humbly craving your Lordship's pity and redress unto my misery, and pardon for this my troubling your Lordship, I rest

Your honour's most humble and
more distressed Mary Digby."²⁷

The note which she enclosed was a list of "such things as were carried away from the house before the Sheriff had the writ to 'praise goods'."

"Household stuff, 5 cartloads	£200
5 score sheep	£45
the trunk that was my Lady's and her woman's	£50
cock of hay	£8
goods of Richard Daye	£20

"Sir Anthony Tyringham and Sir William Andrews, before the coming of the sheriff, took an inventory of the goods in every chamber . . . All goods are carried away even to the very floor of the great parlour."²⁸

From the later letters we gather that Salisbury ordered this loot to be returned, but Lady Digby complains of not being allowed access to it. There is still extant a long inventory of Sir Everard's household goods "seized by Sir William Willoughby knight, late sheriff of the County of Bucks, and remaining in his custody." It includes everything from his best suit of black silk to a pair of wafer irons for making altar-breads. At his other house at Stoke Dry they found his haircloth which is valued at 6/8d.²⁹

Sir Arthur Throckmorton, of Paulerspury, was likewise engaged in seizing the goods of Francis Tresham and Catesby.³⁰ Tresham's were later claimed by Lady Tresham, and returned to her, with the exception of one manuscript volume which Throckmorton thought he might present to the King.³¹ One must be charitable and assume that this was all that he stole, but there is a 13th century manuscript volume, distinct from the above, which once belonged to Sir Thomas Tresham, and was presented to Magdalen College, Oxford, by Sir Arthur Throckmorton.³²

Elizabeth Vaux also thought it worth while to appeal to Salisbury's supposed soft heart. The letter belongs to the latter half of November :

"The knowledge which I have of your worthy disposition, with the security of mine own innocency, emboldeneth me to become an humble suitor unto your lordship for some enlargement, being here at Sir John Swinnerton's house, where I am not allowed any one servant of my son's to have access unto me to stead me in my needful occasions, all mine own men being committed to several prisons. If your lordship do hold me here out of an opinion to draw from me the discovery of that party which your lordship is persuaded had so deep a finger in that most horrible treason, which none living hath a greater detestation of than myself, I do here profess unto your lordship, that it is not in the compass of my power to do it. But I pray heartily unto sweet Jesus, that He in his justice will deliver him into your lordship's hands, if he be guilty, which I have very strong and forcible reasons to make doubt of, but that it becometh me not to contradict your lordship's better judgment.

"And if your lordship have cause to believe I know that party, or might discover him, so your lordship, in your wisdom, cannot but think upon the general rumour of so horrible a treason discovered and supposed to have been intended by any that did but bear the name of a Catholic, every man that stood but in ordinary danger, and had but a common understanding would shun those places most likely to be suspected and searched for them.

"And for your lordship's further satisfaction, I do assure your lordship that there are many that will receive such persons that will not put their lives and estates in the power and secrecy of a woman. And if your lordship shall, notwithstanding these my protestations, rest still doubtful of me, and desire to hold me longer in durance, I will rest with patience your lordship's best pleasure, but I must beseech your lordship's particular memory of me, that have not any to solicit for me but my own tedious lines, which I fear may now seem so troublesome to your lordship, in your more serious affairs, that I must crave pardon of your lordship etc."³³

This letter, though it could hardly have deceived Salisbury, had the desired effect and Elizabeth was released on the bond of Mr. Lewis Pickering, on condition that she remained in London.³⁴

IV

Fr. Gerard need not have been so reticent about his having been at Harrowden all through the search, for long before his book could have appeared Salisbury knew that he had been hiding there.

We have already mentioned among Gerard's friends a certain Anne Lady Markham whose husband had been involved in the Bye Plot in 1604 and had been banished in August, 1605. Lady Markham was anxious to purchase his pardon and a licence for him to return to England. The price she was willing to pay was the betrayal, into the hands of the government and to almost certain death, of her friend Fr. Gerard.

The following letter to Salisbury was written on 18 November while Gerard was crouching in his hiding-hole and Elizabeth was making her uncomfortable journey to London. It is obviously not her first communication with Salisbury.

"Right honourable. Your lordship may think me slack in performing that which I so freely made promise of, but the death of my father hath so much appalled me as I am not fit to do as I would. I did hear Mr. Gerard was taken, which something stayed me. Moreover your lordship hath Mr. Ha[rry] Huddleston in hold, who may direct you the best concerning him of any I know, as also I take it Sir Everard Digby can for Mr. Walley [Garnett]; but thus it is I cannot learn where Mrs [Anne] Vaux is, neither if I knew durst I visit her.

"And this is most strange to me: neither of those which were my servants comes to me, which makes me think they remove with Mr. Gerard, or are imprisoned; but I rather think they are shifted out of the way, because their attendance will make their master more acceptable, one of them being an exquisite painter and the other a 'perfeytt good Imbrotherer' [embroiderer]. The painter is a black man and taller than the Imbrotherer whose hair is yellowish, and was called Christopher Parker by his true name. The painter was called Brian Hunston. I am bold to inform you thus largely of them, because I verily suppose they attend their wandering friend and master, but where, till I either see them or hear some directions, I cannot imagine; but I protest to your lordship, if I could learn I am

resolved he should speak with you, if by any means I could procure it, for I fear this most vile and hateful plot hath taken deep and dangerous root, because I meet with many that will as easily be persuaded there was no gunpowder laid as that [that] holy good man was an actor in the plot; and surely the generality did ever so much admire him that they were happy or blessed in hearing him, and their roof sanctified by his appearance in their house. I am to go shortly into the country. If it would please your lordship to give me leave to send a man to my husband I should be much bound to you, for I cannot tell till I hear from him how to determine of those businesses occasioned by my father's death. I humbly beseech you commiserate my affliction and grant me this poor request etc."³⁵

At this date Lady Markham obviously did not know that Gerard was at Harrowden, but six weeks later, on 3 January, 1606, she writes again.

"Right honourable, Afore I came out of London I sent to know your lordship's pleasure, but mine uncle could not meet with Mr. Levinus [Munck, Salisbury's secretary], and indeed I did think my credit was so decayed with the Padre [Gerard] that I could not, do as I would, employ my best endeavours to perform, thereby to express my great desire of your lordship's good opinion. Now I find either necessity of their part or my two servants' credits hath given me so much power as I shall shortly see Mr. Gerard, but for the day or certain time they are too crafty to appoint. But whensoever, I will do my best to keep him within my kenning till I hear from your lordship, and then, my credit preserved [i.e. provided my friends are ignorant of my treachery] which is dearer to me than life, your command shall be as truly obeyed as if your most trusty servant were commanded.

"I do perceive there are great business in hand, and your lordship is, next to his Majesty, most shot at, but what the project is I dare not be very inquisitive of, because it is not ripe, as by circumstance I perceive: and I labour to make myself in good estimation with them, which would not be, if I covet to know more than they like. This, I protest to God, is only to do service to your lordship.

"There had been some of them with me ere this, but great occasion hath drawn them to haste into other places, whither I know not. If the watch had continued but two days longer, Mr. Gerard had been pined out at Harrowden. I hear Ric[hard Richardson] the butler is close in the Gatehouse, yet your lordship knows that prisons are places of such corruption as money will help letters to their friends to tell what they have been examined of, so they will guess shrewdly how to shift. I have not that I do trust about me with my resolution to do my best endeavour to preserve your lordship, therefore I am enforced to be brief. I beseech you pardon it in me that writes in fear, but if it please your honour to send your note or direction to mine uncle Harvey, I will expect till that he send them, and ever pray etc."³⁶

Salisbury replied on 15 January:

"Madam, Although I do confess my great mislike of the daily resort and residence of the priests and especially of the Jesuits, whose end can be no other than of pernicious consequence to this estate, yet, being in hope that warnings would make them retire from further tempting of law, I have used no extraordinary concern for their apprehension, being, I confess, full of tenderness in matters of blood. But having now discovered by many confessions of the late conspirators that some of these Jesuits have passed so far as to be persuaders and actors in this barbarous conspiracy, which excludeth almost all offices of humanity from men that have softer hearts, I have thought good to take your offer for his Majesty's service, to deliver the person of Gerard (who is one of them) into the hands of the State."

He goes on to explain that he is sending a warrant, but leaving a blank for the name of the addressee, so that she can fill it in with the name of a local, trusted person, "who need not say he comes from you." The service will improve the King's opinion of her husband. He asks her to return his letter and promises to return hers.

"There are only three of your Churchmen," he says in a postscript, "in this wicked predicament, Gerard, Father Walley [Garnet] and Father Greenway, so it is indifferent to the State which of these be come by."³⁷

Lady Markham was not the only Catholic who tried to make profit out of the Gunpowder Plot. As early as 7 November, 1605, the Privy Council issued "a warrant unto Benjamin Johnson to let a certain priest know (that offered to do great service to the State) that he should securely come and go to and from their lordships, which they promised in the said warrant upon their honours."³⁸ It is not known who this priest was nor to what extent Ben Jonson acted as *agent provocateur*. Through the whole century of persecution, from George Elliot to Titus Oates, the priests were dogged and spied upon and betrayed by false brethren won over by gold.

Lady Markham failed in her efforts to betray Fr. Gerard, and her husband remained long in exile. With his customary coolness Fr. Gerard came up to London before the end of November and opened another town house under Salisbury's nose. Nor did Elizabeth desert him.

"Immediately she was released from custody," he writes, "knowing that I was then in London, quite forgetful of herself, she set about taking care of me, and provided all the furniture and other things necessary for my new house. Moreover, she sent me letters daily, recounting everything that occurred."³⁹

One event that she must have recorded was the death of Francis Tresham. He had been apprehended soon after the discovery of the plot and lodged in the Tower, where he fell ill. William Waad the lieutenant wrote to Salisbury on Monday, 23 December :

"As I certified your lordship there was no hope of recovery in Tresham, so it will please you to understand that he died this night about two of the clock after midnight, with great pain. For though his spirits were much spent and his body dead, he lay above two hours in departing. It may please your lordship I may know his Majesty's pleasure for the burying of him, both because it will not be possible to keep him for he smelt exceedingly when I was with him yesterday in the afternoon, and [because] I perceive means will be made to his Majesty to have his body begged, for I find his friends were marvellous confident if he had escaped this sickness and have delivered out words in this place, that they feared not

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the course of Justice, so expecting what direction I shall follow I commit your lordship to God's protection."⁴⁰

Owing to the Christmas festivities the reply was not sent till the following Friday, the 27th, when the Privy Council drew up

"a letter to the lieutenant of the Tower to cause the head of Francis Tresham deceased to be stricken off, and so used by some skilful surgeon that it may be preserved till further direction be given, and that his body be buried on the Tower Hill within the Tower."⁴¹

Thomas Phelpes, the government decipherer and forger, in a letter to Hugh Owen, a Catholic exile much suspected of complicity in the plot, records the last scene :

"Francis Tresham died of sickness, and thought to save the hangman a labour belike, but notwithstanding, in respect of his impenitency, shewing no remorse of the fact, but rather seeming to glory in it as a religious act to the minister that laboured with him to set his conscience straight at his end, had his head chopped off and sent [to] be set up at Northampton his body being tumbled into a hole, without so much ceremony as the formality of a grave."⁴²

By the end of this tragic year, all the conspirators that were still alive were safe in prison. But the three Jesuits whom the government suspected of complicity—the only three, according to Salisbury—were still at large, in spite of every effort to find them. They were Frs. Gerard, Garnet and Greenway.

CHAPTER X

HENRY GARNET

I

WHILE Harrowden Hall was being searched for Fr. Gerard, Fr. Garnet, the two sisters and Little John were lying low, presumably at Coughton. On 4 December they moved to Hindlip Castle,¹ ten miles from Worcester, the seat of Thomas Abingdon, where Fr. Oldcorn had been chaplain for the past sixteen years. This was a huge house, which Little John had equipped with a large number of secret hiding-holes.

A proclamation was issued on 15 January declaring the three Jesuits traitors, and the Privy Council instructed Sir Henry Bromley, a local Justice, to conduct a search on a similar scale to the search of Harrowden. The following account,² obviously by an eye-witness, was written within a few months.

“A true discovery of the service performed at Henlip, the house of Mr. Thomas Abingdon, for the apprehension of Mr. Henry Garnet, *alias* Walley, provincial of the Jesuits, and other dangerous persons there found in January 1605 [-6].

“After the King’s royal promise of bountiful reward to such as would apprehend the traitors concerned in the powder conspiracy, and much expectation of subject-like duty, but no return thereof in so important a matter, a warrant was directed to the right worthy and worshipful knight, Sir Henry Bromley, and the proclamation delivered therewith describing the features and shapes of the men, for the better discovering them. He, not neglecting so weighty a business, horseing himself with a seemly troop of his own attendants, and calling to his assistance so many as in discretion was thought meet, having likewise in his company Sir Edward Bromley, on Monday, Jan. 20 last, by break of day, did engirt and round beset the house of Mr. Thomas Abingdon, at Henlip, near Worcester. Mr. Abingdon not being then at home, but ridden abroad about some occasions best known to himself, the house being

goodly and of great receipt, it required the more diligent labour and pains in the searching. It appeared there was no want, and Mr. Abingdon himself coming home that night, the commission and proclamation being shown unto him, he denied any such men to be in his house, and voluntarily to die at his gate if any such were to be found in his house, or in that shire. But this liberal or rather rash speech could not cause the search so slightly to be given over; the cause enforced more respect than words of that or any such like nature.

“And proceeding on, according to the trust reposed in him, in the gallery over the gate there were found two cunning and very artificial conveyances in the main brick wall, so ingeniously framed, and with such art, as it cost much labour ere they could be found. Three other secret places contrived by no less skill and industry, were found in and about the chimneys . . . These chimney conveyances being so strangely formed, having the entrances into them so curiously covered over with brick, mortared and made fast to planks of wood, and coloured black like the other parts of the chimney, that very diligent inquisition might well have passed by without throwing the least suspicion upon such unsuspecting places. And whereas divers funnels are usually made to chimneys according as they are combined together, and serve for necessary use in several rooms, so here were some that exceeded common expectation, seemingly outwardly fit for carrying forth smoke, but being further examined and seen into, their service was to no such purpose, but only to lend air and light downward into the concealments, where such as were enclosed in them at any time should be hidden.

“Eleven secret corners and conveyances were found in the said house, all of them having books, massing stuff and popish trumpery in them, only two excepted which appeared to have been found on former searches, and therefore had now the less credit given to them.

“But Mr. Abingdon would take no knowledge of any of these places, nor that the books or massing stuff were any of his, until at length the deeds of his lands being found in one of them, whose custody doubtless he would not commit to any place of neglect, or where he should have no intelligence of them, whereto he could then devise no sufficient excuse.

"Three days had been wholly spent, and no man found there all this while, but upon the fourth day in the morning, from behind the wainscot in the galleries came forth two men of their own voluntary accord, as being no longer able there to conceal themselves, for they confessed that they had but one apple between them, which was all the sustenance they had received during the time that they were thus hidden. One of them was named Owen . . . and the other Chambers [*alias* Ashley], but they would take no other knowledge of any other men's being in the house."

On that same Thursday, late at night, Sir Henry Bromley wrote a long account to Salisbury.

"I did never hear so impudent liars as I find here, all recusants, and all resolved to confess nothing, what danger soever they incur. I holding my resolution to keep watch longer (though I was out of all hope to find any man or any thing); yet at last, yesterday being Wednesday, found a number of popish trash hid under boards in three or four several places. The particularities I refer to the relation of this bearer. Wednesday night late I went to my house to take my rest, being much wearied, leaving my brother the charge of the house with sundry of my servants and a sufficient guard besides, in and round about the house, so that this Thursday morning there came two forth for hunger and cold that give themselves other names, but surely one of them I trust will prove Greenway and the other be Hall.

"I have yet persuasion that there is one or two more in the house, wherefore I have resolved to continue the guard yet a day or two. I could by no means persuade the gentlewoman of the house to depart the house without I should have carried her, which I held so uncivil as being so nobly born, as I have and do undergo the greater difficulties thereby."³

Dorothy Abingdon was sister to Lord Monteagle.

The search continued all Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, but with no further success. Then on Monday the 27th, the eighth day of the search,

"the before-mentioned place in the chimney was found, according as they had all been at several times, one after another,

though before set down together for expressing the just number of them. Forth of this secret and most cunning conveyance came Henry Garnet the Jesuit sought for, and another with him named Hall [Oldcorn].

"Marmalade and other sweetmeats were found there lying by them, but their better maintenance had been by a quill or reed through a little hole in the chimney that backed another chimney into the gentlewoman's chamber, and by that passage cawdles, broths and warm drinks had been conveyed in unto them.

"Now in regard the place was so close, those customs of nature which must of necessity be done, and in so long time of continuance, was exceedingly offensive to the men themselves, and did much annoy them that made entrance in upon them, to whom they confessed that they had not been able to hold out one whole day longer, but either they must have squealed or perished in the place.

"The whole service endured the space of eleven nights and twelve days, and no more persons being there found, in company of Mr. Abingdon himself, Garnet, Hall, Owen and Chambers were brought up to London to understand farther of his highness' pleasure."

There is no doubt that Anne Vaux was in the house all the time, but she is never mentioned: obviously she would not betray her identity. Whether she was the gentlewoman who fed the prisoners through a reed, or whether this kind office belonged to Dorothy Abingdon, or to both of them, our document gives no hint.

And now for another account of this search, this time from the other side of the false chimney. Fr. Garnet has headed this letter: "For Mrs. Anne or one of ours first." It is dated "Shrovetuesday" (4 March).

"JHESUS PAX

"I purpose by God's grace to set downe here briefly what hath passed since my apprehension, lest evil reports or untrewes may do myselfe or others iniurie.

"After we had bene in the hoale 7 dayes and 7 nights, and some odd hours, every man may well think we were well

wearyed, and indeed so it was, for we generally sate, save that some times we could half stretch ourselves, the place being not high eno', and we had our legges so straightened that we could not sitting find place for them, so that we both were in continuall paine of our legges, and both our legges, especially mine, were much swollen, and mine continued so till I came to the Tower. If we had had but one half day liberty to come forth, we had eased ye place from bookes & furniture, that having with us a cloase stoole [commode] we could have abidden a quarter of a yeare. For that all my frendes will wonder at, especially in me, that neither of us went to the stoole all the while, though we had meanes to do *servitii piccoli* [pass water] wherof also we were at a nonplus the day of our taking.

"We were very merry and content within, and heard the searchers every day most curious over us, which made me indeed think the place would be found. And if I had known in time of the proclamation against me, I would have come forth, and offered myself to Mr. Abingdon, whether he would or no, to have bene his prisoner.

"When we came forth we appeared like 2 ghosts, yet I the strongest, though my weaknes lasted longest. The fellow that found us ranne away for feare, thinking we would have shotte a pistoll at him, but there came needless company to assist him, and we bade them be quiet, and we would come forth. So they holpe us out very charitably, and we could not go, but desyred to be led to a house of office. So I was, and found a bord taken up where there was a great downfall, that one should have broken his neck if he had come thither in the dark, which seemed intended of purpose. We had escaped if the 2 first hidden souldiers [Owen and Chambers] had not come out so soone, for when they found them they were curious to find their place."⁴

Fr. Gerard gives a more detailed account of the capture of the two lay-brothers, which explains Fr. Garnet's last sentence.

"They [the lay-brothers] perceiving that some of the searchers did continually by turns watch and walk up and down in the room where they were hidden, which was a long and fair gallery four square, going round about the house, they watched

their time when the searchers were farthest off, and came out so secretly and stilly, and shut the place again so finely, that they were not one whit heard or perceived when or where they came out, and so they walked in the gallery towards the door, which they thought belike to have found open. But the searchers being turned back in their walk, and perceiving two strange men to be there, whom they had not seen before, presently ran unto them and asked what they were. They answered they were men that were in the house, and would be content to depart if it pleased them. The others asked whether they were priests : they answered they were Catholics, and that further they would not answer, being no doubt desirous to be taken for such, the better to satisfy the insatiable mind of those blood-suckers. Then being asked where they had been all that while, they answered they had hid themselves, being Catholics, to avoid taking. But the searchers knowing well that it must needs be in the gallery by all circumstances, began a-fresh to search more violently than ever, and to break down the wainscot with which the gallery was lined, and the walls also in a number of places.”⁵

Both Garnet and Gerard were under the impression that the two lay-brothers gave themselves up deliberately, hoping the searchers would be satisfied and call off the search. It rather looks, however, as though they intended to make a daring dash for freedom.

Fr. Gerard's account, though in substantial agreement with the anonymous report given above, differs in many details. He was writing abroad, and complains that he could not get first-hand information. He makes the search begin on a Sunday [Jan. 19th] and puts the capture of Owen on the following Saturday. He says Frs. Garnet and Oldcorn were determined to die in their hiding-place, but that it was discovered. He also states that the warrant to search Henlip was issued as a result of information supplied by Humphrey Littleton, who had been arrested for giving shelter to Robert Winter, and hoped to save his life by betraying his kinsman and his friends. But Littleton's statement⁶ is dated 26 January, when the search had been in progress nearly a week. It was sent up to Salisbury on the 27th.,⁷ and could hardly have reached Bromley before Garnet

was discovered. Indeed there is a receipt, dated 28 January and signed by Bromley, for a letter from the Privy Council "concerning Mr. Abingdon and the priests,"⁸ which probably contained the information supplied by Littleton. It need hardly be said that Littleton was executed, although he had turned King's evidence. Garnet, at all events, had no idea that his capture was otherwise than pure chance :

"The search at Henlip," he continues, "was not for me, but for Mr. Hall as an abettor of Robt. Winter. Then came a second charge to seek for Mr. Gerard. Of me never no expectation, so that it was only God's pleasure to have it so as it is. *Fiat voluntas eius.*"

This anonymous report and Fr. Garnet agree that he was found on the eighth day. This would be Monday, 27 January. But Bromley's letter to Salisbury announcing the capture is dated 30 January.⁹ This delay in sending up such important news is most suspicious. It looks as though Salisbury was secretly notified on the 27th, and that this letter was designed to convince the public that he knew nothing of Garnet's capture before the 30th. The conspirators were tried on the 27th, and hastily executed on the 30th and 31st. Salisbury wanted the world to believe that these witnesses were unfortunately silenced before Garnet's capture. He wrote to Sir Thomas Edmondes on 12 Feb. : "*Since their execution* Garnet the provincial Jesuit, with some other Jesuits, is taken at Mr. Abington's house in Worcestershire and brought to London."¹⁰ It seems that Salisbury, on hearing of the capture of Garnet, hurriedly eliminated all the important witnesses before the capture was made public. It is certainly most suspicious that, in those leisurely days when the condemned were often kept waiting weeks and even months for execution, the government should have been in such a hurry to get rid of all those whose evidence was so vital for Garnet's trial, at the very moment of his apprehension.

There was certainly no suggestion, a few days before, that the executions were to be rushed. On 25 January, Parliament appointed a committee, presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury "to consider what extraordinary proceedings and punishment were fit to be ordained for the offenders in the late most horrible treason." They had not yet been tried, but that

was a mere detail. Then on the 30th this committee reported that the Lord Chief Justice (Popham) had informed them that the execution of the said traitors may not conveniently be deferred, so they have "foreborn and given over."¹¹ The first batch of conspirators had, in fact, been executed that very morning. Surely these executions would have been delayed if there had been any desire to see justice done.

Fr. Garnet and the other prisoners were taken to the house of Sir Henry Bromley, treated with every kindness, and given time to recover their strength. Garnet writes: "Sir Henry by the proclamation kept me strait and made of me exceedingly, saying I was a learned man and a worthy priest."

On 5 February they all set out for London, but Garnet was still "but a weak and wearisome traveller."¹² They arrived in London on the next day, and Salisbury, without any show of exultation wrote that evening:

"We are sure of Hall and Walley in the Gatehouse, to which place we have this night committed them, themselves not sticking now to acknowledge their dignities [priesthood]."¹³

On Sunday, 19 January, the day before the search at Hindlip began, a very different event took place in the London Charterhouse. Lady Elizabeth Howard, who was to have wedded Lord Vaux, was married to William Lord Knollys, afterwards Earl of Banbury.¹⁴ The plot that failed to blow up the parliament had destroyed all hope of an alliance between the great Catholic houses of Vaux and Howard—or so it seemed.

II

No sooner had Sir Henry Bromley set out for London with his prisoners, than Mistress Anne and Dorothy Abingdon followed them, and spent the first night (at least) in the latter's lodging in Fetter Lane.

Prisons, in spite of their unpleasantness in other respects, were not difficult to visit, but it would have been risky for Anne to have appeared openly at the Gatehouse, as she was herself liable to arrest for harbouring. If she made any immediate attempt to communicate with Garnet it was unsuccessful, for it was not till a fortnight later that he knew that she was in town.

In the Gatehouse at this time was Fr. Garnet's nephew, Fr. Thomas Garnet, a young Jesuit, who was martyred at Tyburn in 1608. He was then passing under the aliases of Sayer and Rookwood. The two priests were not left long together, for the uncle was transferred to the Tower on 14 February, but the contact established seemed to offer a convenient way for Henry Garnet to correspond with his friends.

On 19 February the Privy Council sent a letter "to the Lord Chief Justice of England, the lieutenant of the Tower etc., about the examination of prisoners committed about the powder treason, wherein power is given to put any of the inferior sort to the manacles [Topcliffe's rack] so that the Lord Chief Justice or their Lordships be first acquainted with it and do think it fit."

Three days later, on the 22nd, another letter was sent, amplifying the former. It shows how little their Lordships desired the public to know of the grisly horrors that they were contemplating.

"A letter to the Lord Chief Justice of England, the lieutenant of the Tower, his majesty's council learned, John Corbett Esq. or any three of them, wherein power is given them to put the inferior prisoners to the rack with such restrictions as in their letters of the 19th of February, and to send for any other prisoners that are not in the Tower, but if they put them to the manacles then to cause them to be kept still in the Tower."¹⁵

Fr. Garnet not being of the "inferior sort" was not included in this permit to torture. It seems that he was tortured only once, and that just before his condemnation. For the present he was treated with unusual deference in the Tower, where he had "a very fine chamber."

"I am allowed," he wrote, "every meal a good draught of excellent claret wine, and I am liberal with myself and neighbours for good respects to allow also of my own purse some sack." He found the lieutenant, Sir William Waad, "very kind in usage and familiarity, but most violent and impotent in speeches when he entereth into matters of religion."¹⁶

Garnet was kind-hearted and responsive to kindness. The subtle, scheming Garnet of protestant fiction bears about as much resemblance to the true Garnet as the small boy's guy

bears to Guy Fawkes. He was a gentle scholar, with a quiet sense of humour that he kept to the last, an infinite courtesy, and an all too trusting belief in the honesty of others. His superiors had been dubious as to his fitness for the English mission: they felt they were sending "a lamb among wolves." Fr. Gerard must have had a twinkle in his eye when he applied to his beloved friend and superior those words of St. Paul: *Omnia credit et omnia sperat*. "Believeth all things, hopeth all things!"¹⁷

It was natural that his captors should try to trap such a one by a show of kindness, rather than to wring information from him by brutality. His keeper feigned great sympathy, and a willingness to help him, accepted his liberal bribes and betrayed him all along the line. He showed him how he could converse, through a hole, with Fr. Oldcorn who had been deliberately placed next door, and Garnet was naive enough to trust him. In this way the two priests spoke, as they thought, confidentially on several occasions, while two eavesdroppers listened in. The government must have been bitterly disappointed with the results, but they made the most of one or two ambiguous phrases, which the listeners may have misheard. There is no reason to suspect them of dishonesty, but they admitted themselves that they could not hear all. "They are honest men" said Garnet, "but they did not hear well."

The first conversation was on 23 Feb.

"I think," Garnet was heard to say, "Mrs. Anne is in the town. If she be, I have writ a note that my keeper may repair to her near hand, and convey me anything unto her, who will let us hear from all our friends."

Referring to his keeper he said:

"I gave him an angel yesterday, because I will be beforehand with him, and he took it very well, with great thanks; and now and then at meals I make very much of him, and give him a cup of sack, and send his wife another, and that he takes very kindly. So I hope we shall have all well. You should do well now and then to give him a shilling, and sometime send his wife somewhat. He did see me write to Mr. Rookwood, but I will give him no more money yet."¹⁸

This letter to Mr. Rookwood was written on a long narrow

piece of rough paper in orange juice. Both lemon and orange juice make passable secret ink, but with a difference. Both may be made permanently visible by heat, but lemon juice may also be made visible by soaking in water, and disappears when the paper dries. Orange juice was thus safer, for if the letter was intercepted and read, the writing could not be made to disappear again. However, the government got over this difficulty by delivering cleverly forged copies, while they kept the originals.

The letter bears no date or address. On the back in ordinary ink is written :

"I pray you lett these spectacles be sett in Leather and with a leather case and lett the fould be fitt^{er} for y^e nose. for ever H.G."

Evidently Garnet wrapped up his spectacles in a long piece of apparently blank paper. The jailer took this straight to the authorities who warmed it by the fire and read as follows :

"This bearer knoweth that I write thus but thinks it must be read with water.

"The paper sent with bisket bread I was forced to burn and did not read. I pray write again.

"I have acknowledged that I went from Sir Everard's to Coughton, and stayed 2 or 3 days after my Lady went to London, and then rode away alone.

"Also that Bates and Greenway met by chance and Greenway said all Catholics were undone, not as they would have it, that Jesuits only were discredited.

"I read the letter before Bates and Greenway. My Lady Digby came in. What did she? alas what but cry.

"My answer was to Bates by word of mouth. I am sorry they have, without advice of friends adventured in so wicked an action. Let them desist. In Wales I neither can nor will assist them, and if Wales were so disposed as they imagine, yet were all now too late.

"I must needs acknowledge my being with the 2 sisters and that at Whitewebbs, as is true. For they are so jealous of Whitewebbs that I can no way else satisfy. My names I all confess but that last. Appoint some place near where this bearer may meet some trusty friend.

"Where is Mrs. Ann?"¹⁹

There is much to be said for the...
The first point to be considered is...

"I have not been able to find...

...the first point to be considered...

...the first point to be considered...

...the first point to be considered...

...the first point to be considered...

...the first point to be considered...

...the first point to be considered...

...the first point to be considered...

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...the first point to be considered...

...the first point to be considered...

...the first point to be considered...

...the first point to be considered...

The letter that came as wrapping for biscuit bread, and that he was forced to burn unread was from Mistress Anne. It does not now exist. If it had been intercepted the government would, of course, have kept the original and sent Garnet a forged copy. Hence it probably got through undetected. It is referred to in the next letter. This is written in the bold, unpractised hand of Mrs. Anne, in spelling that is her very own and with never a suspicion of punctuation. But it is as clear today as when Salisbury's agent warmed it by the fire, and is the only one of hers that is not extremely difficult to read. It is undated but written about 24 Feb. On the back in ordinary ink and in another hand is written :

"I pray you prove whether these spectacles doe fytt yo^r sight."

Evidently Anne wrapped up the spectacles in her letter, which reads as follows :

"on Saturday [Feb. 22] at supper the aturne sead that when you yeare in excamening you fened your self sike to goe to yeay camber and coming and coming [*sic*] thether you seme to take sume marmelate which even then was sent you and burned a letter which yor kepper seing did tel, [*an erased*] and you being excamened sead that it yas a leter that a frend had sent you and fering that ther meight be anething of danger to the partey you burned it and that you had aknolegeg that you knew of the powther action but not a practeser in it. the paper sent you with the Box was concerning my self. if this cum safe to you I will wryte and so will more frendes who wolde be glad to haue derrection. who should supply you rouse for myselfe. I am forced to seeke new frendes my olde are mos carels of me. I beseihe you for god sake aduies me what cours to take. so long as I ma here from you I [goe] not out of Lunon. my hope is that you will contenu your care of me and commende to sum that will for your sake helpe mee. to leve with out you is not life but deathe now I see my los. I am and euer will be yours and so I humbly beseihe you to acounte me. o that I meight see you

Yous''²⁰

Handwritten text in a script, likely Devanagari, covering the left page of the manuscript. The text is arranged in approximately 25 horizontal lines. A circular stamp or seal is visible in the middle-right portion of the page, partially overlapping the text.

Handwritten text in a script, likely Devanagari, covering the right page of the manuscript. The text is arranged in approximately 25 horizontal lines, continuing from the left page.

on Saturday at supper the Atkinses said
that when you were in excommunicating you
tossed your selfe like a ball they can
ber and coming and driving the letter you
sent to me like some marmelade which
when then was sent you and burned a
letter which you kepper seeing it is all
and you being excommunicated said that it
was a letter that a friend had sent you
and fearing that they might be another
of danger to the party you burned
it and that you had a knowledge that
you know of the power the action but
not a preference in it the paper sent you
with the Box was concerning my self
if this can save it I will write and so
will more friends who would be
glad to have direction from you
who should supply you volume for my self
I am forced to seek new friends my
old are wearied of need be like you
for god sake advise me what course to
take so long as I make here from
out of London my hope is that you will
continue your care of me and can meet
me to sum that will for your sake help
me to be with you it is not life but
dear life now I see my les I am and you
will be yours and so I firmly beseech
you to accept me that I might
see you



Handwritten text in Devanagari script, likely a manuscript or letter. The text is arranged in approximately 25 horizontal lines. The ink is dark, and the paper appears aged and slightly discolored. The handwriting is cursive and somewhat faded in places, particularly towards the bottom of the page. The text is enclosed within a faint rectangular border.

If Fr. Garnet was humanely treated, "more like a nurse child than otherwise" as Salisbury put it, and was subjected to nothing worse than this mean and despicable treachery, it was far otherwise with the "inferior sort." Full advantage was taken of the Council's sanction of torture, and the Tower officials were indulging in an orgy of hideous barbarity. It should be remembered that these lesser prisoners were only witnesses and entirely innocent. No charge of complicity was ever brought against them at the time and no charge has been made since.

James Johnson, Anne's faithful servant at White Webbs was brought to the Tower and racked on four or five consecutive days, once for three hours at a stretch.²¹ They racked out of him what the reader already knows, that Catesby had made merry at White Webbs and eaten venison.²² Catesby was dead, so the revelation was of no importance. On 26 February he was taken to Garnet's chamber and later confessed that Mr. Measy of White Webbs was indeed Garnet.²³ And that was the sum total of information extracted by wanton inhumanity that was so extreme that it was given out that he was dead.

In a letter dated 26 February, Fr. Garnet refers to this visit of James Johnson. The letter is headed *en clair*:

"My very loving sister Alice . . . more hereafter. Do not endanger yourself but if you have any to bring you to me, by the Cradell To[wer] you may."

This suggests that he was imprisoned in or near the Cradle Tower, whence Fr. Gerard had made his escape. The letter is not addressed, but Garnet was taxed with it later on and has endorsed it: "This is the letter which I sent by the woman. Thomas Sayer *alias* Rookewoode. Henry Garnet." It was evidently sent to his nephew in the Gatehouse, but was meant for Anne Vaux, and for her to pass on to the Jesuits. There is a fairly long letter this time in ordinary ink acknowledging gifts of sheets and pillow cases and a handkerchief, and asking for a pair or two of socks and a black night cap. Then follows a longer letter in orange juice, partly in Latin, making various appointments, in his capacity of Jesuit superior, and partly in English, referring to his examinations.

"I acknowledged I was at Whitewebs but one or two nights

this twelve month. The house is none of mine, though this day they will have me to be Mr. Measy and brought James to my face, who said nothing, neither have I confessed any particular but of Mrs. Perkins [Anne Vaux], and the meeting of Catesby and Winter in Q. Eliz. time. Yet they know all the persons, and so I wish all to be wary till their malice be wrought on me: [*then in Latin*] *It is necessary that one should die for this people.*"²⁴

A further conversation between Garnet and Oldcorn took place on the next day, 27 February. One of the eavesdroppers reported among other things:

"Then Garnet said that Mr. Attorney asked him if he were not at the christening of a child at White Webbs, and that Sir Wm. Waad gibbingly said he was surely at the christening and at the begetting. Then said Garnet, it were not fit to use those words to him at that time in this place of justice. Then said Mr. Attorney to him again, 'Why,' said he, 'you know it well enough; it was Mrs. Brookesby's child. It had a shaven crown.' Garnet made mention of one Mrs. Jenings, but only we heard the name. Then Garnet bid Hall hold up his mouth higher. Garnet said they let him see James, but, saith he, he went not along by me."²⁵

The torturing of witnesses still continued, but special attention was paid to those who had been captured with Garnet, and might therefore be forced to say something that could be used to convict him of complicity. Both Fr. Oldcorn and his lay-brother servant Ralph Ashley *alias* Chambers were tortured again and again, the priest for five hours a day for four or five days together.²⁶ A comparison of Oldcorn's signatures,²⁷ before and after torture is still enough to make one's blood run cold. They were later condemned to death, and died together at Worcester on 7 April, 1606.

But the prisoner from whom they hoped most, and against whom they used the greatest cruelty was Nicholas Owen, the maker of hiding-holes.

"He hung," wrote Fr. Gerard, who was in London at the time, "in the torture seven hours together, and this divers times, though we cannot as yet learn the certain number,

but day after day we heard of his being carried to torments."²⁸

The last occasion was on 1 March when they got him to confess and to subscribe "that he hath been oftentimes with the said Garnet at the house called Whitewebbs in Enfield Chase."²⁹ What more they were trying to rack out of him we shall never know. Perhaps it was the location of some hiding hole that he had made. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that as he hung there by his hands, the fate of the Catholic Church in England hung with him, for had they wrenched from him the secrets locked up in his breast, it would have been well nigh impossible for a priest to hide in England.

Now Little John had a rupture, and according to law, even in those barbarous days, a man whose body was thus broken could not be racked. Not only was this law ignored, but when he would not confess they tied weights to his feet, until the inevitable happened. In the awful, but only adequate words of Gerard, they "did force out his guts." The authorities gave out that he had committed suicide by ripping up his belly with a pointless knife. As there were only hostile witnesses within those sombre walls it is impossible to refute their evidence, but Fr. Gerard, who had suffered similar torture points out the impossibility of even holding a knife after such an ordeal, and Little John's friends then and now will be forgiven for preferring the statement of a Tower attendant who said simply: "He died in our hands."³⁰

The date of his death given officially by the authorities was 2 March, but already on the first the rumour was circulating among the London Catholics that he had been tortured to death, and a papist named James Fitzjames was arraigned before the Star Chamber for daring to say so publicly.³¹ It therefore appears that the ghastly butchery took place on the 1st, but that he lingered in agony till the morrow.

About the time of Little John's death, Anne wrote again to Fr. Garnet, but her letter³² was and is almost entirely illegible. It seems certain, judging from her letters (and there is other evidence too) that besides being a chronic invalid she was very short-sighted. Unaccustomed to writing at the best of times she found writing in orange juice a sore trial to her eyes, and on

this occasion she could not see when she had left a mark, and when her pen had failed. Hence only an odd word here and there came out when the paper was heated. It is a great pity, as she may have mentioned the death of Nicholas Owen.

Fr. Garnet answered this practically blank sheet on 3 March. Again the letter is endorsed at some later date by Garnet "Thomas Sayer *alias* Rookwood," but it is obviously intended for Mrs. Anne. He writes first, in ordinary ink :

"I have received 2 bands, 2 handkerchiefs, 1 pair of socks, and a Bible. God reward all friends. I would you could make shift to borrow eleven pounds. I shall be able to repay at the least half again, when I can send to a friend.

"I and Mr. Hall have not yet paid our fees, whereat I am ashamed. Thus with most hearty commendations I cease
3 Mar. Yours for ever, H.G."

Then in orange juice

"Your last letter I could not read. Your pen did not cast ink. The Latin was for Mr. Blunt [Fr. Richard Blunt S.J. the acting-superior] or any of the Society. Show it them if you have it still, or I will write again. You shall know my mind more fully, if you or any friend repair to my keeper's mother as you shall know direction. But come not hither except with good guides, and when Waad is abroad, for he is often with me or in the gallery hard by. You may see me, but not talk. Our friend P. Carey is hard by me. We salute daily. Take heed no more of our friends come in danger. It will breed new examinations."³³

Then follow two paragraphs, one about Catesby's confession and another about various sums of money.

On the next day Fr. Garnet wrote the account of his capture which we have already given, and a long account of his many examinations which does not concern us, except the following :

"No friends I have taken knowledge of only Mrs. Perkins. though they name her sister also and say they will have her. Corpus Christi lodging I think is safe."

The letter concludes :

"For God's sake provide bedding for these 3, James [Johnson] John [Chambers] and Harry [Huddleston?], by begging or by money if there be to spare, your own necessities always regarded. I know not how Mr. Strange is provided. May be he knoweth how to send out: for to me he cannot send."³⁴

The two following letters, which obviously make a pair, are undated, and it is impossible to place them in the series. Anne's acknowledgement of the spectacles suggests they belong to the beginning of the correspondence, when the spectacles were so much in evidence. Also this seems to have been the first letter that Anne received. This is the only letter of Garnet's that can be called a personal letter. The others were directed to her for safety's sake, but were intended for his brethren and his other friends. There is nothing written *en clair*; all is in orange juice.

"Concerning the disposing of yourself, I give you leave to go over to them; the vow of obedience ceaseth, being made to the Superiors of this mission. You may upon deliberation make it to some there.

"If you like to stay here, then I exempt you till a Superior be appointed whom you may acquaint, but tell him that you made your vow of yourself, and then told me, and that I limited certain conditions, as that you are not bound under sin except you be commanded *in virtute obedientiae*. We may accept no vows: but men may make them as they list, and we after give directions accordingly.

"Mr. Hall dreamed that Fr. General would have him and me professed. He said that I was professed already. 'Yea' quoth he, 'but I will have him professed of 10 or 11 vows more,' and there were provided 2 fair tabernacles or seats for us and so he awaked, and falling asleep again had the same dream.

"Your sister and nephew look to themselves till the bruit be passed.

"Tell Mr. Blunt we owe £20 per an. to Mary Green and George Perkes.

"I have confessed no person.

"Let all I write out be very secret.

"That of eleven vows was mistaken.

Henry Garnet."³⁵

Anne's reply is very difficult to read, and was very difficult to write. She could not see, with the quickly vanishing ink, where she had already written, and wrote over the same ground twice. Once she completely loses her line, and, with the bare patches where her pen left no trace, the meaning of certain passages is obscure. It is impossible to convey any idea of the chaos. The following is as near as I can decipher. The words in italics are conjectural.

"Good father I have receued you spectakels and thouth it be the greatest cumfort I have *had in the* world to here from you, yet this is the greatest greife *ecap* [except ?] your takeing that I euer hade for that it semeth you leaue me *unto my* selfe, and that is so great a *griefe* as nothing in the *whole* world can be more. hou ma I euse my wou of pouerty and what is your will absolutely for my going or steing.

"I will cum to be *aquainted* with you I will be your sister *ever* if I can, *and if you please* to geue me leave. I preaye you make Mr. Care partaker of the benifites of the sosiety. Mr. haule his dreame had bene a great cumfort if at the fute of the throne ther had bin a place for me. god and you know my unworthenes. I beseich you healpe me with your prayers. thus in most dewtyful maner I commende my selfe to you

Your and not *my* one A. V.

(written sideways in left margin) "I send you hose and doblet. wryt if you have them. x pound is demanded *for* your *keper* and if you wil I wil send."³⁶

On the back in ordinary ink and in a hand very like her own is written "yours euer." This may be the forger trying his hand.

By the end of the first week of March, Salisbury must have realized that this correspondence was getting him nowhere. There was not a word in it that even Sir Edward Coke could make appear treasonable. It was only once made use of in Garnet's trial, when Coke quoted the letter of 26 February. But all he attempted to deduce from it was a charge of blasphemy, because Garnet had applied to himself Our Lord's words: "It is necessary that one should die for this people." Not only were these letters useless to the government, but they provide an argument for Garnet's innocence, for even when he wrote

what he thought was secret and confidential he never wrote a word that cannot bear the full light of day, and the scrutiny of time.

III

We need not follow Fr. Garnet through all his examinations. There were twenty-three in all, and one at least was under torture, but none of them played any part in his trial and condemnation. His guilt was established, to the satisfaction of Salisbury, by his declaration of 8 March. As we have seen, the "original" of this, "all in his own hand," is gravely suspect. It stresses just the points that the government wished to be stressed—the foreknowledge of Greenway, the complicity of Hugh Owen, and the fact that the plot was intended to kill not only the King, but "the Queen, the most regarded of the Pope and all Christian Princes, the Prince himself and perhaps his brother, a number of ladies, and many perhaps Catholics, all the nobility with their eldest sons, many either Catholic or affected that way."³⁷ There are other passages, quite harmless and having every appearance of being genuine, that lead one to conjecture that Garnet did write a declaration on 8 March, that Salisbury carefully edited it, had a fair copy forged in a hand that is extremely like Garnet's, and that this is the document now at Hatfield.

It is to this document alone that Salisbury constantly refers as proof of Garnet's guilt. On this very 8 March he adds a postscript, in his own hand, to his dispatch to Edmunds, our Ambassador at Brussels :

"You may now confidently affirm that Fr. Walley is guilty *ex ore proprio*, this day confessed, of the Gunpowder Treason, but he saith he devised it not, only he concealed it when Fr. Greenway *alias* Tesmond did impart to him all particulars, and Catesby only the general. Thus do you see that Greenway is now by the Superintendant as guilty as we have accused him. He confesseth also that Greenway told him that Fr. Owen was privy to all. More will now come after this."³⁸

On the next day he wrote to the Earl of Mar :

"Since our parliament began we have proceeded as you have heard with the Gunpowder traitors, in which, though divers priests have been noted to be foul, yet none of them have fallen

into our hands but Walley, of whom we conceive that your Lordship shall shortly hear that he is condemned by clear justice to have been privy to the foulest treason. [*Written sideways in margin*: For no longer than yesterday he hath confessed that Greenway the Jesuit whom Bates accused, and Catesby did make him privy to it, but that he dissuaded them, the truth whereof I leave to your own judgment now he is come so far.] Only the fear we have is, that we the commissioners shall be excommunicated for meddling with him that is the little pope of the kingdom, [the fear whereof makes you keep in Scotland, *inserted*]. For his life, it is not it which is of value, but seeing the law of nature and of nations teacheth all kings to prevent destruction practised under the mantle of religion, it is expedient to make it manifest to the world how far those men's doctrinal practice reacheth into the bowels of treason, and so for ever after stop the mouths of their calumnation that preach and print our laws to be executed for difference in point of conscience."³⁹

This is the most honest expression of what Salisbury hoped to achieve by the gunpowder plot.

Salisbury sent the news to his Ambassador at Venice in a letter of 19 March. Venice was further away and so he was able to lie more boldly :

"Garnet the Provincial, who was one of them proscribed by the proclamation which I sent you in my last despatch, being now taken and examined in the Tower, hath confessed both his own privy and Greenway's in the treason of gunpowder, and some other of the society, not sticking to avow the action justifiable by divinity. Thus you see now what these men be, that under the mantle of holiness and piety do countenance the foulest and most abominable treason that ever was conceived against their prince and country. But I doubt not but they shall shortly have their just reward, as their fellows have lately had before them."⁴⁰

In none of these letters does Salisbury make any allusion to the crucial fact that Garnet's knowledge came to him under the seal of Confession.

Garnet's statement of 8 March provided Salisbury with all

that he needed. Garnet's fate was now sealed. Indeed the trial adds very little except abuse. So the correspondence in orange juice was brought to an end, and a new form of treachery devised for Anne Vaux. Fr. Gerard thus relates it :

"They resolved to pull off the vizard from the dissembling face of the false keeper, and that he should no more show his former readiness to please or pleasure the good Father ; but only that he should bring the good gentlewoman into the snare, which he had drawn her into by his faithless promising, which he performed in this manner.

"Finding the devout gentlewoman desirous to see her good Father at the window of his prison, he promised to satisfy her wishes therein, and appointed a time when she should come to the Tower privately, and he would carry her to a place where she should at least see him, if not speak with him. She failed not of her time ; but coming thither found such signs and causes of distrust that she returned sooner than she had intended, and was followed by persons prepared for the purpose, to see whither she would go, to take her at her lodging, thereby not only to bring her, but her friends also in question. The gentlewoman, perceiving herself to be dogged, would not go to her own lodging nor to any Catholic house, but wisely intended to have gone into the prison of Newgate, where there was great store of priests and other Catholics, unto which, many of all sorts had continual access.

"Thus far they let her pass quietly, but when they saw she intended to go no further, they presently stayed her, and with some rough usage carried her back unto the Tower, from whence she came, and there committed her prisoner, which is a very unwonted place for women to be committed in."⁴¹

This arrest took place on, or a little before 11 March, on which day she was examined. The interrogatories she was made to answer are lost but it is quite easy to guess the questions from her answers.

"To the first she answers that she kept the house at White Webbs at her own charge with the help of that which she had from such as did sojourn with her.

"2. Since her coming from White Webbs, which was at Bartholomewtide she hath past the greatest part of her time with divers of her friends in the country, and she came from Mrs. Abingdon's house at Henlip, where she had remained about a fortnight before her coming with her to London, which was presently after Sir Henry Bromley went from the house. The first night she lay with Mrs. Abingdon at her lodging in [Fleet Street *erased*] Fetter Lane, and since hath not lodged above two or three nights in one place, but where those places are she will make no other answer than that it is needless.

"3. That Catesby, Tho. Winter and Tresham and others came divers times to her house, but the particular times and particular names of all that came she cannot remember.

"4. She saith that William Sheppard and Robert Andrye have been from her above a quarter of a year, and that she had no other man at Henlip with her than Robert Marshall, who also went from her before her coming from hence, and never told her of his departure.

"5. She saith that she went to St. Winifred's Well after Bartholomewtide, in the company of the Lady Digby, and others whom she refuses to name.

"6. She will not say that Walley was there.

"7. She saith that she understood nothing from the meeting at St. Winifred's Well what should be done in the beginning of the Parliament for the good of the Catholics.

"But she saith that being at Winter's and at Grant's, and seeing their fine horses in the stable she told Mr. Garnet that she feared these wild heads had something in hand, and prayed him for God's sake to talk with Mr. Catesby and to hinder anything that possibly he might : for if they should attempt any foolish thing it would rebound to his discredit. Whereupon he said he would talk with Mr. Catesby, and after assured her that he had nothing in the world to do, but had those horses to go into the Low Countries, where he was to have a Colonel's place, and that Mr. Garnet had written for the said Mr. Catesby who showed her his letter, and said he would get a licence though it cost him £500.

"She saith she was at Coughton on Allhallowday and knoweth nothing of any prayer that was said there."⁴²

Next day she wote out a declaration all in her own round, unpractised hand. The third word is "sorry."

"I am sore to here that Father Garnet shoulde be ane yease pryve to this most wiked actions as him selfe euer cauled it. for that hee made to me maney greate prostertations to the contrari diverstimes sence

Anne Vaux."⁴³

On the 24 March she was examined as to her knowledge of Francis Tresham. Her answers show very clearly the unrest among a group of Catholics, incidently refers to two more of her houses, and gives the government the first information they got of the house at Erith.

"She doth say that Mr. Francis Tresham was cousin german removed unto her and came sometimes to White Webbs to visit her and Mr. Garnet, and she thinketh that he hath been there twice or thrice since the King's coming in, and sometimes in the company of Mr. Catesby, and before the King's coming in he was there some few times and sometimes he dined there and sometimes stayed a night, and at these times Mr. Garnet always gave him good counsel and persuaded him to rest contented. She remembreth he would use these words 'Good gentleman, be quiet. God will do all for the best. We must get it by prayer at God's hands, in whose hands are the hearts of princes.'"

"She further doth remember that Mr. Tresham came to a house at Ayrith [Erith] where Mr. Garnet and she remained sometimes the last summer between Easter and Whitsuntide last, where, talking with Mr. Garnet he gave the said Tresham good comfort insomuch as when he came from Mr. Garnet Mr. Tresham said openly: 'He is all full of good hopes,' and at the same time Catesby came thither likewise, who with Francis Tresham dined in the company of Garnet and this examate.

"She further doth remember that the said Francis Tresham came once to a house she had at Wandsworth and that was the first year the King came in, and his coming was in an afternoon

and tarried not past two or three hours, and had some conference with Mr. Garnet.

"The last summer he was likewise at another house they had, where he had some conference with Mr. Garnet, where likewise he exhorted him to all patience.

Anne Vaux"

This document was taken to Fr. Garnet, who has written under it :

"I do acknowledge these meetings and repair of Mr. Tresham to be true as is contained above.

Henry Garnet"

On the back is one further item

"She further calleth to remembrance that about the end of the last summer when Mr. Garnet and she went into Warwickshire they came to Mr. Francis Tresham in Northamptonshire in their journey, where Mr. Tresham was at that time, his father being deceased but a little before ; by reason whereof the Lady Tresham kept her chamber, and she and Mr. Garnet supped with Mr. Francis Tresham who kept the house at that time, and went away the next day.

Anne Vaux

I also do well remember
this above, now, which I
did not think of before

Henry Garnet"⁴⁴

Fr. Garnet has left us a vivid picture of his treatment in the Tower during the week before his trial.

"I perceive the Commissioners would fain have me as deep in this matter as may be ; and after I had acknowledged all that was true, my Lord Chief Justice said that they must have more of me than so ; for I must forsooth confess that I was the very original of all, and the plotter : and besides I must confess such noblemen as Catesby and the rest did build on, both in this action and also in the intended invasion from Spain : and for these two points I was to go to the torture a second time upon Friday [March 24] which was Good Friday

beyond sea. But I pleaded that I was hardly dealt with, having told all I could, and bade them set down what they would have me confess, and so far as it concerned only my own credit I would acknowledge it without torture: whether torture were appointed as a punishment or as a trial. What if I confessed nothing in my next torture, must I be tortured again? and that this was against the course of common laws. But they said, No, not in cases of treason. For what! saith my Lord Chief Justice, this that you have confessed is nothing. Will you make your fault but a peccadillo? I entreated that in respect of my conference with the 3 Deans all the forenoon (for I should have been racked that forenoon) and in respect of my long examination that afternoon, I being wearied, the torture might be deferred till another time, and desired Mr. Lieutenant to be a mediator. They all said they were sorry, but it was so commanded. Well then, quoth I, this is the day in which my Saviour died for me. I am contented, and will appeal to a higher Judge. So I went to my chamber, but afterward Mr. Lieutenant told me he had obtained a delay till the next coming of the Commissioners, though the Council's commandment was most peremptory, and my Lord of Salisbury told me that more than I had told should be brought out of my fingers' end. Some days after came Mr. Corbett, and told me that the Council thought best to get out of me by mildness what I knew. But I told them that verily I knew no more . . . and that whensoever I should be condemned, and to die, they should perceive that upon never so great remorse and fear of God I could utter no more than I had done; and by this means I caused them to hasten my arraignment, that I might be quiet . . .

"I know not by what treachery that which I wrote in orange to Mrs. Anne was taken at the Gatehouse, where they took some advantage, yet without cause. So that of force I must confess my knowledge, neither was it wisdom against evidence to suffer tortures, which I thank God for a better cause I could have sustained . . . I had hoped Mrs. Anne Vaux would have kept herself out of their fingers."⁴⁵

The gestapo methods of extracting the "truth" could hardly be more powerfully portrayed.

Garnet's trial was to take place in Westminster Hall on Friday, 28 March. On the eve of the trial the Lieutenant of the Tower wrote a letter to Salisbury that implies that neither was as yet satisfied with the evidence against him:

"All the persuasions I am able to use can as yet prevail nothing with Garnet, either in that particular or any other I 'proponed' unto him, as I have done divers, by way of conference. In matter of equivocation I send your Lordship, wherein it may please your good Lordship I may inform that he, upon better consideration, did interline that which is in the first side at a line I have drawn a good space after he did set it down in writing, and so he added also all the fourth article, upon better bethinking himself of the case. This being as yet [all] I can get of him, I send it and rest ever humbly, W. Waad. 27 March 1606."⁴⁶

The trial began at the Guildhall at 8 a.m. on Thursday, 27 March, and lasted till seven in the evening. There is an official account, and another long one published by Foley.⁴⁷ Neither adds very much to the story. From a letter of John Chamberlain, written on 2 April, we learn that:

"The King was there privately, and held it out all day, besides many courtiers and ladies, as the lady Arabella [Stewart], the lady of Suffolk, [lady] Walsingham, Sir James Hayes' lady, *cum multis aliis*. The sum of all was that Garnet, coming into England in '86, hath had his finger in every treason since that time, and not long before the Queen's death had two Breves sent him from the Pope, directed to the nobility and clergy of England, to provide, that *Quandocunque contigerit miseram illam feminam ex hac vita excedere*, they should (*neglecta propinquitate sanguinis* or other respect) make choice of such a one as either were Catholic or would tolerate Catholic religion, which Breves he kept by him till he saw the King fully settled, and then burnt them. The declaration of the foresaid treasons was a long work, and when all was done he was not to be touched for them, having gotten the King's pardon the first year of his reign. But touching this late hellish conspiracy he was proved to be privy to it in two several ways at least, both by Catesby himself and by Tesmond or Greenway, to which he

answered that from Catesby he had it only in general terms, and from Tesmond *sub sigillo confessionis*, and that he did not only dissuade but pray against it, which though it were no sufficient answer, yet it was further replied that Catesby having imparted to him the particulars of the same plot to be executed in Q. Elizabeth's time, it is not likely he would conceal them from him now."⁴⁸

To deduce a man's conduct now from his conduct in the past is always a dangerous argument: to deduce it from a purely imaginary past is the height of absurdity. There was no gunpowder plot in Elizabeth's reign.

The long, dreary speeches of Coke and the Earl of Northampton are full of this sort of tendentious rubbish, and nobody now takes them seriously. If Coke excelled in invective, and Northampton in bombast, full marks must be given to Salisbury for hypocrisy. When we remember the King's own instructions for the torture of Guy Fawkes—*sic per grados ad ima*; when we remember Salisbury's admission of 4 December—"Yea, what torture soever they be put to"; when we examine that last ghastly attempt at a signature by Fawkes, or by Oldcorn, or read the account of Nicholas Owen, we cease to take the following words (or any other words) of Salisbury's at their face value:

"By reason of their [the Catholics] impudent slanders and reports, we are kept in such awe that we dare not proceed against them by such means as they do in other countries to get out the truth, but are fain to flatter and pamper them, for if any of them die in prison of sickness, they say he is starved or tortured to death; if any man kill himself, he is made away by us, so that we are fain to get out matters by fair means as we can. So that this man [Garnet], by the cunning of his keeper was brought into a fool's paradise, and had divers conferences with Hall which were overheard by spialls set of purpose."⁴⁹

The falsification of evidence is only what we might expect from such men. One example will suffice.

Francis Tresham had stated in his confession that Father Garnet knew of the negotiations with Spain in 1602. On his death-bed in the Tower he retracted this accusation, saying it

was more than he knew, as he was not at that time acquainted with Garnet.

Coke, the Attorney General, wrote to Salisbury just before the trial requesting the return of the examination of Anne Vaux, dated 24 March (given above) as "it will be of good use against the damnable execration of Tresham."⁵⁰ At the trial

"Mr. Attorney desired licence to read a letter written by Mr. Tresham lying upon his death-bed in the Tower, where upon his salvation, as you shall see, he avoucheth a notorious untruth. The letter was read, and the contents were to clear Mr. Garnet from any notice of the Spanish treason, protesting that he had wronged him in it, and upon his salvation he moreover protested that he had not seen him in fourteen years before. Yet Garnett and Mrs. Anne Vaux (though otherwise a very obstinate woman) confessed that Tresham within these three years had been several times at their houses at White Webbs, and Mrs. Vaux confessed that he had been twice there this very last year, and had received very good counsel from him. Now, saith he, what shall we think of this man? I would be lothe to judge of a dead man, because *inter pontem et fontem misericordia Domini*, but yet I would not be in his case for the world."⁵¹

Fr. Garnet who, of course, never saw the retractation had to admit rather lamely that Tresham equivocated. But fortunately Tresham's letter is extant. It was written by his servant (and alleged illegitimate brother)⁵² William Vavasour, and signed by Tresham. It bears an endorsement dated 24 March:

"This note was of my own handwriting. By me William Vavasour." This was evidently asked for by Coke. The letter reads as follows:

"I have here set down under my hand (being too weak to use my own hand in writing this) which I deliver here upon my salvation to be true, as near as I can call to mind, desiring that my former Confession may be called in and that this may stand for truth. It was more than I knew that Mr. Walley was used herein [in the Spanish treason], and to give your Lordship besides my oath, I had not seen him in sixteen year before, nor never had message nor letter from him."⁵³

Thus Tresham says that he had not seen Garnet for sixteen years before 1602. Coke deliberately cooks this and makes him confess that he had not seen Garnet for fourteen years before 1605.

This may not affect Fr. Garnet, but at least it clears Francis Tresham of the charge of dying with a lie on his lips.

Later in the trial, Salisbury

“showed how gently Father Garnet had been used, more like a nurse-child than otherwise, and that in this arraignment divers things had been permitted to be read, which made for Father Garnet; as namely this testimony of Mrs. Vaux, who, said the Earl, would sacrifice her life to do him good.”⁵⁴

The examination of Anne Vaux is the only document Salisbury can name that “made for Father Garnet,” yet it was introduced simply to discredit and dishonour a dead man.

Judging by the reports that have come down to us, Garnet did not make a very spirited defence. He was ill and possibly doped. He was hopelessly hampered by the fact that all the material witnesses for the defence had been liquidated. He perhaps realized, what is so obvious to us, that his condemnation was a foregone conclusion. According to modern standards the trial was, of course, a complete farce. Even if the charges had been juridically established they would only have amounted to misprision of treason, i.e. failing to reveal the plot to the government. Yet even before his capture his name had been placed first in the list of conspirators, he was arraigned as a principal conspirator, found guilty of treason, and sentenced to be drawn, hanged, and quartered.

IV

Fr. Garnet was carried back to the Tower to await his death. It was the middle of Lent, and it had been decided to delay the execution till after the Easter holidays. This gave him a clear month to set his affairs in order. Now that it was all over his soul was at peace. He wrote on 3 April a letter to Anne Vaux, no longer in orange juice, and no longer about himself. He now had time to think of her sorrows and of her future, and the utter calmness of this letter shows how little he feared the ghastly death that awaited him. It is endorsed: “Garnet to

Mrs. Vaux, to be published after his death by her to the Jesuits." It is surely not necessary to say that she never received it.

"My very loving and most dear Sister,
Because I know not whether a note I sent forth came to your hands or no, I will write now more particularly a direction for you, what I think best for you, when it shall please God to set you at liberty.

"First, if you can stay in England and enjoy the use of Sacraments in such sort as heretofore, I think it absolutely the best. And then do I wish that, if it may be, you and your sister live as before in a house of common repair of the Society, or where the Superior of the Mission shall ordinarily remain. Or if this cannot be, then you and your sister to make the choice of some one of the Society, as you shall like, which I am sure will be granted you.

"Secondly, if you like to go over, then do I wish that you stay a while at St. Omers, and send for Father Baldwin, and consult with him where to live, for I think St. Omers to be not so wholesome as Brussels. And then in respect of your weakness, I think it best for you to live abroad [i.e. in the world] and not in a monastery.

"Your vow of obedience, being made to the Superior of the Mission here, when you are once over ceaseth. And then may you consult how to make it again. But you must know that none of the Society can accept a vow of obedience of any, but anyone may vow as he wish, and then one of the Society may direct accordingly. So that you may vow obedience to your ghostly father appointed or to be appointed by the Rector of the College where you shall live, or to any particular person, if it be such that he is stable in the place, and not like to be soon removed.

"For poverty you may also do the like; but this I would have you know, that all that is out for annuities I always meant to be yours; hoping that after your death you will leave what you can well spare to the mission . . .

"As for the goods at your house, you know they will let you have all that is abroad [i.e. not hidden away]. I gave order that the books should be taken away, neither was there any place fit to hide them. But if they or anything else be

found in holes, you must challenge them as yours, as indeed they are. Otherwise let all things lie that are hidden till fit opportunity, and let God work His will.

"Howsoever, I shall die a thief, yet you may assure yourself your innocence is such that I doubt not but if you die by reason of your imprisonment, you shall die a martyr . . .

[in Latin] "Farewell ever most beloved to me in Christ and pray for me."⁵⁵

On the day after this letter was written his peace of mind was rudely shattered, and he was to find it again only when he hung lifeless on the gallows.

One would expect that now that judgment had been passed he would have been left in peace to prepare for death. But Salisbury and Waad had other ideas, and, in this long sordid business, the most sordid episode was reserved till now.

In spite of the Government's loud lying, it was by no means proved that Garnet knew of the plot outside Confession. By the laws of all civilized nations, knowledge received under the seal of Confession was absolutely sacrosanct, and no priest could be justly condemned for concealing it. If English law at that time took no cognizance of the sanctity of Confession, the English Government was conscious that not only the whole of Catholic Europe, but the large body of Catholics at home would regards as a martyr a priest who suffered for concealing such knowledge. In order to disgrace and discredit Garnet and his brethren in the eyes of the world, it was essential to convince public opinion, and posterity if possible, that Garnet had some guilty knowledge of the Plot outside the confessional. And since they had already executed all those who might have been induced to abet them, it remained only to take further advantage of Garnet's amazing artlessness and gullibility.

Garnet had stated that he had heard of the plot from Greenway, who had heard it from Catesby, and that in both cases the information had been revealed under the seal of Confession. Garnet had admitted this much only because he had, while in the Gatehouse, received a note stating that Greenway was safely beyond the seas. The government had not one scrap of evidence to disprove what was, in the eyes of Catholics at least, a perfectly innocent admission.

The sequel will show that even after the trial the Government was far from satisfied with the meagre evidence that they had got by such infernal means. They determined to resort to a stratagem more odious than any they had so far used. They informed Garnet that Greenway had been captured, and had sworn that the revelation he had made to Garnet was not *sub sigillo*. The result was what we might expect. Garnet believed the lie without any hesitation. Waad writes hopefully to Salisbury on 4 April :

“ . . . I have half brought him to confess that the discourse he had with Greenwell of these horrible treasons was not in confession, and I hope to use the bearer to make him acknowledge it before the Deans. I drew him to say that if it were not in confession, he conceived it to be delivered in confession howsoever Greenwell did understand it.”⁵⁶

On the same day Garnet, deeply distressed by the news of Greenway's apprehension, wrote a long letter to him, which Waad must have promised to deliver :

“My most dear and loving Sir, I am sorrier for your taking than for my own. I found at my coming hither all men possessed with informations of me, everyone almost having touched me of those which are gone before. And withal after many examinations and denials, the special thing against me was that Mr. Hall [Oldcorn] and I had sundry conferences, when we made our confessions and gave one another information of our examinations. There were two witnesses in a corner which heard all, and gave evidence of principal points ; though they mistook them, so that I thought it better to tell the very truth, with less discredit to our Order, than to permit them to have harder conceits of us as of contrivers and authors of all the conspiracy.

“And because I assumed that you were beyond, as I was told, I laid part of the blame upon you, you being already touched very deeply, for the which I heartily ask your forgiveness. I said that you, at the house in Essex, told me of the matter in confession, yet walking and after confession, because it was too tedious to hear all kneeling. I said I thought you knew it in confession with leave to tell me, though I charged

you not to be known to any that you had told me. Also that you gave me leave to reveal my knowledge if ever I came in question here or beyond for it. We both conspired to hinder it and to this purpose I wrote continually to Rome, procuring censures, but not expressing particulars. I never approved it, nor, as I think, you.”⁵⁷

There is a great deal more of this letter, but it does not concern us here.

What further lies Garnet swallowed during the next week we can only conjecture. It would appear that he was made to believe that Greenway had confessed that when he told Garnet of the plot he did not go to Confession at all. Sorely puzzled by these lying reports that he could not reconcile with his own recollections, Garnet wrote again on 13 April :

“That knowledge which I had by Mr. Greenwell I took it as in confession, for he offered to go to confession of purpose ; but I said I would take it as in confession, he being my ghostly child, and being to come shortly to confession ; though then and in many other conferences I presumed to be licensed to utter my knowledge if ever I should come in question, the thing being laid to my charge. And this point has bred me much disgrace, for the Commissioners and the King say that Mr. Greenwell acknowledges that it was not *sub sigillo confessionis*, and it may be that he meant not so, but I stand to it as the truth is that I took it so, both because he offered confession and after few days came to confession.”⁵⁸

It is easy enough to see that there are verbal discrepancies in the various accounts that Garnet has given of his interview with Greenway. They do not, of course, affect the main point, that he conceived that the facts were imparted to him *sub sigillo*. He consistently maintains that he understood the revelations as binding him to secrecy in this solemn way.

But the fact remains that Garnet's hesitations have created a widespread impression that he was not truthful. He openly claimed the right to deny facts even on oath, until evidence was produced. In those days, when a prisoner could be hanged on his own, unsupported evidence, often extracted by torture, it was obviously reasonable that a man should be allowed to deny

what could not be proved, or until it was proved. Lord Vaux and Tresham, in 1581, had denied that Campion had been in their houses, but they would not go so far as to deny it on oath. This reluctance had landed them in the Star Chamber on a charge of contempt of court, for which they were heavily punished. It is difficult to determine what is normally justifiable in the face of persecution. There would be no justification for such denials in a modern English court of law, but it does not follow that they were unjustifiable in the 17th century, or that they may not become justifiable again under some new reign of terror. Nor is it at all clear why Garnet's statements are at variance. His enemies assume that he was trying to cover up an original lie by making it approximate to the "truth" that Waad pretended they had got from Greenway. Less partial writers like Lingard assume that he modified what he had first said out of solicitude for Greenway, who would (he thought) be tortured if their testimonies did not agree. It is equally possible that Greenway's alleged statement had shaken Garnet's confidence in his own memory, and that he deferred to what he thought was Greenway's clearer recollection. Greenway was his "ghostly child," who came regularly to confession to him. Garnet might be certain in his own mind that on a particular day, nine months before, Greenway had been to confession; but this certainty would receive a severe shock from Greenway's supposed statement to the contrary.

Even taking the harshest view, Garnet's misdemeanour pales into insignificance before the lies and the forgeries of those who were out for his blood. Salisbury might hold up his hands in horror at Garnet's equivocations, but he was hardly the person to cast the first stone. The fact is that all the resources of a totalitarian state, and every form of dishonesty were used against a helpless prisoner to brand him as a liar. It is not surprising that this powerful propaganda met with some success. The State Papers that were for so long in the custody of men like Salisbury contain only what the government thought fit to preserve, and they need to be treated with caution.

Still dissatisfied with the proofs of Garnet's guilt, Waad stooped to tell yet another lie. He informed Garnet that Richard Fullwood, a trusted servant of the Jesuits, had been taken together with a letter in code, and the key to the code.

He prevailed upon Garnet to write a letter to Fullwood instructing him how to answer. But it does not appear that Salisbury derived any advantage from this, beyond enjoying the obvious anxiety that it caused his helpless and bewildered prisoner.

On Easter Monday, 21 April, Garnet wrote his last letter to Mistress Anne.

"It pleaseth God daily to multiply my crosses. I beseech Him give me patience and perseverance *usque in finem*. I was after a week's hiding taken in a friend's house. Here [i.e. at the Tower] our confessions and secret conferences were heard, and my letters taken by some indiscretion abroad. Then the taking of yourself: my arraignment; than the taking of Mr. Greenwell; then the slander of us both abroad; then the ransacking anew of Erith and the other houses; then the execution of Mr. Hall [Oldcorn]; and now, last of all, the apprehension of Richard [Fullwood] and Robert with a cipher, I know not of whose, laid to my charge, and that which was a singular oversight, a letter written in cipher, together with the cipher, which letter may bring many into question. [*Then in Latin*] *Suffer even these; you have heard and seen the end of the Lord, that God is merciful and kind. Blessed be the name of the Lord.* Yours in eternity, as I hope, H. G."⁵⁹

Even after all this double-dealing he seems to have not the slightest suspicion that he had been betrayed at every step, and he was to be left in the dark, to carry his heavy burden of sorrow even to the gallows.

The execution was fixed for 1 May, a day then celebrated with reckless hilarity. It was later changed to 3 May, but not out of regard for Garnet's feelings.

"It was looked yesterday," writes Dudley Carleton on 2 May, "that Garnet should have come a-maying to the gallows which was set up for him in Paul's Church Yard on Wednesday [30 April], but upon better advice his execution is put off till tomorrow for fear of disorder amongst 'prentises and others in a day of such misrule. The news of his death was sent him upon Monday last [28 April] by Doctor Abbot, which he could hardly be persuaded to believe, having conceived great hope of grace by some good words and promises

he said were made him ; and by the Spanish Ambassador's mediation who he thought would have spoken to the King for him. He hath been since often visited and examined by the Attorney, who finds him shifting and faltering in all his answers, and it is looked he will equivocate at the gallows. But he will be hanged without equivocation, though some do yet think he shall have favour, upon a petitionary letter he hath written to the King."⁶⁰

The only favour he got from the King was the grace to hang until he was dead instead of being cut down and butchered alive.

On 3 May he was led out to execution. As he walked across the courtyard to his hurdle, amidst a large gathering of people he took leave of Mrs. Waad, the lieutenant's wife who was a kindly soul, and joked with Tom his cook. He exchanged greetings with Lord Gray, a Catholic prisoner, who watched from a window. And then suddenly from behind one of the guards there darted a familiar form. It was Mistress Anne. William Waad was amazed and furious, and ordered her to be immediately conducted back to prison. So Anne Vaux, without so much as a last "Goodbye," relinquished the charge of the Jesuit Superior, a task which she performed with such courage and fidelity for twenty years. Waad turned on her jailor with a stream of oaths that he usually reserved for theology. Nor was his temper improved when the jailor retorted : "I was only carrying out your orders."⁶¹ From a letter⁶² written by a Jesuit only a week later we learn that Waad had told the jailor the day before that Anne Vaux might watch Father Garnet pass by, from a window in the Tower. The jailor went one better, and brought her into the courtyard. We also learn that even under this bitter blow her constancy never deserted her, and she did not break down.

Thus was severed a friendship that had lasted twenty years, years of the bitterest persecution that England has even known. Anne Vaux had fulfilled her task to perfection. Never had a priest been taken while sheltering under her roof, and it was only when they were without a house of their own that Garnet fell into the hands of his enemies. Even then she did not desert him, and no risk was too great for her to run. Salisbury for

once spoke the truth when he said that she would sacrifice her life to do him good.

Of the five Jesuits who had been hidden in her house during that memorable search of 1591, Southwell had been executed in 1595, and now Oldcorn and Garnet had followed him. Gerard had been captured and tortured, but was again at liberty. It only remains to add that the fifth, Thomas Stanney, was committed to the Gatehouse in December, 1605,⁶³ where he seems to have gone out of his mind.⁶⁴ He was banished in 1606, and died abroad.

It was a quarter of a century since Campion had landed in England, and Winter's Powerful Wind had blown with varying intensity all that time. The Seminaries abroad had ordained some eight hundred priests, most of whom returned to England. One in six died on the scaffold, and more than sixty layfolk died with them, mostly for the crime of relieving them. But the Cedar still stood firm, and still stretched forth its arms to shelter them.

PART III

THE AXE

*How can the tree but waste and wither away
That hath not some time comfort of the sun ?
How can that flower but fade and soon decay,
That always is with dark clouds run ?
Is this a life ? Nay, death you may it call
That feels each pain and knoweth no joy at all.*

THOMAS VAUX.

THE

1871

When the morning sun
I saw the world in
A new light
The world was
A new world
The world was
A new world
The world was
A new world

THE

CHAPTER I

THE WIND THAT SCATTERETH

I

NO previous event, not even the Armada, had succeeded in making papists so universally unpopular as the melodrama of the Powder Plot. When on 23 January, 1606, Sir Edward Montague moved in Parliament that November 5th should be a public holiday for ever, he was received with tremendous applause.¹ The ancient custom of letting off fireworks at the beginning of November was easily transferred to the 5th, and there it still remains. The day was celebrated with a special service in the Anglican liturgy, with a solemn, if inaccurate Collect. Money was left for annual no-popery sermons, some of which, including that at Irthlingborough, still continue. Guy Fawkes, who played only a minor part in the plot, has stolen all the limelight, and his christian name has settled down as an ordinary English word. Year by year we are exhorted to remember the guy, but, except at Lewes in Sussex, the traditional no-popery has practically ceased to exist.

For more than two centuries, however, the celebration of Guy Fawkes Day kept alive the hatred of the Catholic Church. Any sudden catastrophe that fell on the country was put down to the papists. They were judged capable of almost any outrage, with a special weakness for incendiarism. The Great Fire of London was attributed to them, and the Monument long bore an inscription to that effect. They were credited with quite exceptional powers. A fire at Kettering was blamed on popish agents, "those harbingers of ruin whose Nostrils belch quotidian Flames"² which made it difficult to avoid setting things alight. The Plot was superb propaganda, and Catholics have never quite lived it down. Sir Thomas Smith foretold in February 1606 that "this bloody stain and mark will never be washed out of popish religion."³

The most eloquent testimony to the growing hatred of popery in Northamptonshire is to be found in the Recusant Rolls, those

lists of convicted papists who were mulcted of £20 a month for not attending the Protestant churches. Prior to the Plot the number in this county is never more than twelve. By 1608 it has climbed to 182, and this level is more or less maintained till 1620.

Another indication of the growing hostility to papists is the number of exiles who tried to make a new home beyond the seas. The two Jesuits who were named with Garnet in the Proclamation of January, 1606, decided that it was necessary for them to leave England for a time. They were being ruthlessly hunted, and their presence would gravely endanger the lives of their friends. Soon after the publication of the Proclamation Fr. Tesimond was one day casually reading it in a London street. After the descriptions of Gerard and Garnet he read :

“Of a reasonable stature, black hair, a brown beard cut close on the cheeks and left broad on the chin, somewhat long-visaged, lean in the face but of a good red complexion, his nose somewhat sharp at the end, his hands slender and long fingers, his body slender, his legs of a good proportion, his feet somewhat long and slender.”

It was a description of himself.

He also became aware of a little man next to him, who was carefully comparing the description with the original. What to do? To move away hurriedly would only confirm suspicion, so he decided to stay and brazen it out. Suddenly the little man clapped a hand on his arm, and arrested him in the name of the law. There were a number of people about and resistance was useless. He agreed to go quietly, and the little man led him off in triumph to prison. But as they passed down a quiet, unfrequented street, the priest suddenly turned on his captor, and being “of a reasonable stature,” had no difficulty in asserting his superiority. When the little man had recovered his breath, his prisoner had vanished. Fr. Tesimond made his way to Suffolk, and as he had entered England with a cargo of stale fish, so he left with a cargo of dead pigs, and now he passes out of our story.⁴

John Gerard spent the spring of 1606 in a private house in London, not without constant danger and many adventures. On 9 April search was made for him at Montague House in

Southwark, in the course of which some of the searchers who were watching from the Tower of St. Mary Arches saw a figure run across a court-yard and into another house, bare-legged and slippered, and with only a cloak cast over his shirt.⁵ It was strongly suspected that this was Gerard, but though it would be a characteristic last appearance, it does not tally with the account that Gerard himself gives of his escapes. On 3 May, the very day of Garnet's execution, dressed in the livery of the Spanish Ambassador, and with a thousand florins provided by Elizabeth Vaux, he too crossed to Flanders, and thence to Rome.⁶

It was not only the Jesuits who were impelled to cross the seas. Many of those who had been their friends, and who had given them shelter, thought it discreet to follow them, and among the number were several members of the Vaux family.

June Lady Lovell, widowed sister of Elizabeth Vaux, petitioned Salisbury for permission to go and live at Spa, with her two young daughters, as she was suffering from cancer of the breast. He rejected her proffered present of her own needlework, but the warrant was issued on 2 January, 1606, allowing her to take six servants with her.⁷ One of these "servants" was Joyce Vaux, Elizabeth's second daughter. Lady Lovell, after trying her vocation with the Benedictine nuns at Brussels,⁸ eventually founded a monastery of Carmelites at Antwerp.⁹ Joyce had the intention of becoming a Benedictine, but changed her mind and joined the Carmelites.¹⁰ She then changed her mind again, and became one of the earliest members of a Congregation that had recently been founded by a remarkable woman named Mary Ward.

Sir Thomas Edmonds, Ambassador at Brussels writes to Salisbury on 1 June, 1608 :

"The Jesuits did also lately set in hand one Mistress Ward to sue for leave to set up a house of Poor Clares, near unto Gravelines . . . If this liberty be allowed, to set up daily new houses in this manner, it will serve more and more to authorize and enable these people to continue their practices against his Majesty's state. The most of them that were dealers in the Gunpowder Treason are, as your lordship knoweth, now resident here."¹¹

His fears must have increased next month, for on 5 July

Magdalen Digby, sister of the conspirator, and the young lady that Sir Everard thought a good match for Fr. Gerard, arrived in Brussels and entered the convent of the English Benedictine nuns.¹² In 1614 she was followed by Lucy Tresham, the younger daughter of yet another conspirator, who became Dame Winifred in the same convent.¹³ There were also among the nuns in Flanders, Helena Catesby, Mary Lady Percy, and two half-sisters of Ambrose Rookwood, and Mary Ward herself was a niece of the brothers Wright.

Active orders of nuns are now so much taken for granted that it is difficult for us to appreciate the position in 1610. A nun at that date, and ever before, was a woman enclosed, dedicating her life to God, possibly teaching a few children, but never going out and about, and usually seen only through a grille. When Mary Ward conceived the idea of an active order, she was viewed with the greatest suspicion by Rome and by most of the clergy. When she went further and got the strange idea of sending nuns to England, to share the hardships and dangers of the hunted, persecuted priests, the notion was so crazy that few took it seriously: few, save Fr. John Gerard and Fr. Richard Fulwood who had helped him to escape from the Tower, and was now a Jesuit priest himself. They stood by her through all her troubles and even encouraged her extravagant views. After a false start, Mary Ward overcame all obstacles, and in spite of opposition the numbers grew. Even when her Institute was formally suppressed by the Pope, she did not lose heart, and her children are working in England today. There was of course only hostility and contempt to be expected from those outside the Church. Her nuns were nicknamed Jesuitesses, Wardists, Expectatives and the Galloping Girls. They called themselves simply the English Ladies.

By the end of 1611 the first little band of Sisters had started work in London. Two years later their house was broken open by pursuivants, and astonished Londoners witnessed the spectacle of nuns in their religious dress, being conducted in two open coaches through the streets to be interrogated by George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, who did not like nuns. They were all imprisoned in the Gatehouse, but it is a pleasure to record that the rest of the Privy Council opposed the Archbishop, and they were soon released.¹⁴

On 21 October, 1621, Mary Ward with four of her community, a maid, a priest and a serving man, with two horses to carry the baggage, set out from Brussels and walked in the depth of winter, and through wild country infested by bandits, to Nancy and Basle and Lucerne, through rugged Alpine passes, through the St. Gothard Pass to Como and Milan, on to Bologna and Ancona and Loreto, and over the Appenines to Rome, where they arrived according to schedule on Christmas Eve. It was a journey of about fifteen hundred miles, accomplished in two months. "Galloping girls" indeed!¹⁵ It does not seem that Joyce Vaux was one of the party, but she was one of the original members of the house opened in Rome, and in 1624 became Superior of the house in Perugia.

Edward Lord Vaux was the next to leave England. His hopes of foreign travel had been rudely shattered by the Powder Treason, and it was not until 8 September, 1608, that he procured another licence to travel for three years.¹⁶ He set out soon after to join an old friend of his in Italy. This was Sir Oliver Manners. Fr. Gerard had converted him some years before, and records how this pious youth always carried some devotional book in his pocket.

"You might see him in the court or in the Presence Chamber, as it is called, when it was crowded with courtiers and famous ladies, turning aside to a window and reading a chapter of Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*."¹⁷

Sir Oliver had been the King's Carver.¹⁸ This was an honour rather than a pleasure. The King sat in his stiletto-proof doublet, "his breeches in great pleats and full stuffed. He was naturally of a timorous disposition, which was the greatest reason for his quilted doublets. His eyes large ever rolling after any stranger came into his presence, insomuch as many for shame have left the room, as being out of countenance. His beard was very thin: his tongue too large for his mouth, and made him drink very uncomely, as if eating his drink, which came out into the cup in each side of his mouth."¹⁹ So Sir Oliver turned away and read the *Imitation*. Just before the Gunpowder Plot he resigned his position and travelled in Italy. In September, 1608, he was in Rome and very ill.²⁰ It was perhaps here that Lord Vaux joined him. In November, 1609, they were together

The first of these is the fact that the library is not a mere collection of books, but a living organism, which grows and changes with the needs of the community. It is not a static institution, but a dynamic one, which adapts itself to the changing conditions of the world. The second of these is the fact that the library is not a mere repository of knowledge, but a place where knowledge is shared and where it is used to improve the lives of the people. It is not a place where knowledge is hoarded, but a place where it is put to use. The third of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of learning, but a place where learning is a continuous process. It is not a place where learning is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where learning is a part of the life of the community. The fourth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of culture, but a place where culture is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where culture is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where culture is a part of the life of the community. The fifth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of service, but a place where service is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where service is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where service is a part of the life of the community.

The sixth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of information, but a place where information is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where information is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where information is a part of the life of the community. The seventh of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of entertainment, but a place where entertainment is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where entertainment is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where entertainment is a part of the life of the community. The eighth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of recreation, but a place where recreation is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where recreation is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where recreation is a part of the life of the community. The ninth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of education, but a place where education is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where education is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where education is a part of the life of the community. The tenth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of research, but a place where research is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where research is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where research is a part of the life of the community.

The eleventh of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of study, but a place where study is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where study is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where study is a part of the life of the community. The twelfth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of work, but a place where work is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where work is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where work is a part of the life of the community. The thirteenth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of play, but a place where play is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where play is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where play is a part of the life of the community.

The fourteenth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of rest, but a place where rest is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where rest is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where rest is a part of the life of the community. The fifteenth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of health, but a place where health is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where health is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where health is a part of the life of the community. The sixteenth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of beauty, but a place where beauty is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where beauty is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where beauty is a part of the life of the community. The seventeenth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of peace, but a place where peace is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where peace is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where peace is a part of the life of the community. The eighteenth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of love, but a place where love is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where love is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where love is a part of the life of the community. The nineteenth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of hope, but a place where hope is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where hope is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where hope is a part of the life of the community. The twentieth of these is the fact that the library is not a mere place of faith, but a place where faith is a part of the life of the community. It is not a place where faith is confined to the walls of the library, but a place where faith is a part of the life of the community.

in Milan,²¹ and in May, 1610, at Florence.²² In April, 1611, Sir Oliver was ordained priest in Rome,²³ and doubtless Lord Vaux was there at the time. Then in the autumn they turned their steps towards England, as their licences expired in September. They passed through Padua on 3 October, and the fact was duly reported to England.²⁴ On 16 October they were in Milan again, and Lord Vaux writes a very tedious letter to Salisbury, full of stilted flattery, asking for an extension of their licences, as Sir Oliver "lieth sick of a desperate fever." and is unable to travel. He adds in a postscript that he himself is leaving for Flanders on the morrow.²⁵

Lord Vaux's second brother, Henry, was admitted a student at the English College in Rome in June, 1610, aged 19, and remained till 1618. He then went to Flanders and took a commission in the English regiment fighting under the Archduke.²⁶

The third brother, William, had been at school at the Jesuit College at St. Omers, and on 1 May, 1609, was admitted to the English College at Valladolid, aged 19. He was later turned out "because he refused to conform to the end of this college."²⁷ In 1612 he was in Lisbon, and the English Consul, Hugh Lee, was keeping an eye on him :

"I do secretly hear," he writes to Salisbury on 8 February, "that young Vaux, of whom I wrote you in my last, goeth also in this passage for England. The young gentleman is of a red hair, and very pale-faced ; one side of his nose is somewhat sunk. He is about 18 years of age. He hath altogether been governed here by Henry Fludd S.J., who keepeth him very short in his allowances so that the young gentleman is not well pleased therewith, and had not let to break out in speeches that the old Lady Vaux his mother hath been one of the best friends the Jesuits have had in England, for she hath harboured them and hid them in stone walls, and furnished them with money ; taking it very unkindly that they esteem no more of him here. And doubtless, what I have heard from himself, he taketh small liking of sundry sorts of churchmen, neither in Spain nor here, so that if he do go in this passage, I am in mind he would easily be brought to alter his opinion, for he will often speak of their disordered lives, and much dislike thereof."²⁸

He embarked for England before the end of the month.²⁹

Uncle Ambrose was already in exile at the time of the Plot, serving under the Archduke in Flanders. In 1609 he set out on pilgrimage with a friend named Anthony Copley. They reached Rome in August,³⁰ and sailed thence to the Holy Land.

"And coming to Jerusalem they were both knighted at Our Lord's sepulchre. As the manner is that when such pilgrims there, as can show sufficient proofs to be of noble extraction, and capable of knighthood, if they will undertake to observe the points there proposed, for to defend the honour of God in the manner set down, the Guardian of the Franciscan convent there dubbeth them knights. After they had performed their devotions, visiting the holy places, in their return home, he [Copley] died by the way, and Sir Ambrose Vaux coming home brought news of his death."³¹

There is a brief report from Lionel Wake the English Agent at Antwerp, written on 11 December, 1610, which shows that Ambrose was running true to form :

"Mr. Ambrose Vaux is returned from Jerusalem but in very poor estate, and was there in prison, but now escaped and upon his journey hitherwards."³²

Thus by 1610 there was not a single male member of the family left in England, but the women were still at their posts, and to them we must return.

II

Some time before the Plot, Fr. John Percy, Gerard's companion at Harrowden, had been transferred to Gayhurst to serve as chaplain to Sir Everard Digby and his family, Fr. Thomas Strange replacing him at Harrowden. Sir Everard had an uncle, John Digby, who lived in the manor house at Seaton (Rutland). He had suffered five years imprisonment in the Tower, "indicted for treason," and was released in 1590.³³ Now in his old age the pressure of the persecution was too much for him ; he had bowed to the times and conformed. His former confessor, having failed in all his efforts to reclaim him, called in the aid of Fr. Percy.

Percy accordingly rode over to Deene Hall, the house of John Brudenell, where his cousin Christopher Blunston was employed, and then, on Monday, 31 March, rode via Harringworth, across the Welland to Seaton. His arguments proved of no avail with the obstinate old man, and next day he departed. But when he got to the foot of the hill he found the Welland in full flood and quite impassable, so he returned to Digby's for another night, and renewed the attack, but still without success. He set out again on Wednesday morning [April 2], only to find that the approach to the bridge was under water. As he had often travelled that road, he decided to risk it. He had not gone many paces before the horse fell into the river, and flung him with such violence against the bridge that he fractured his shoulder. He still clung to the bridle, and managed somehow to scramble on to a beam that formed part of the parapet. His servant raced back up the hill for assistance, and old Digby hurried down to the river bank with his servants, and helped in the rescue. Percy was carried back to the manor house and dosed with *aqua vitae*. The old man was so overcome with the risks that the priest was willing to run on his behalf that he made a good confession, and the Rutland Digbys kept the Faith for another hundred years.

Percy was carried to a bone-setter in Stamford, and then to Deene Hall. Here he stayed till Passion Sunday [6 April]. He was there again for Palm Sunday, and on the following Wednesday he walked across the fields to Kirby Hall with his cousin, and stayed three nights with Mistress Mallory the tenant. Soon the Justices of the Peace were on his track. They traced him to Seaton, and examined witnesses there on 24 April: they went on to Deene, and got, among other irrelevant matters, a long biographical statement from Christopher Blunston. But by that time Percy was safe at Harrowden, and they seem to have called off the hunt, in despair of ever finding him there.³⁴

Elizabeth Vaux at this time was still under bond to remain in London. On 17 April she wrote to Salisbury:

"I have been a long and an humble suitor unto your Lordship but for leave to go into the country both for the recovery of my health as also to avoid the great charges I live at here, and I find both my suit and myself so wholly neglected that

I cannot but marvel what hath made so great a change in your Lordship, from whom I found such honourable usage : as when I was last at the Council table it pleased your Lordship, in particular out of your noble disposition, to show that care for my health and estate as I could not think how to yield sufficient thanks unto your Lordship for your so great favour towards me. Since which time I cannot accuse myself that I have given your Lordship the least cause of alteration, but have endeavoured to deserve the best I could in thankfulness towards you. Now if any have incensed your Lordship against me, I shall hold myself highly bound unto your Lordship but to let me come to my trial. Thus loth to be tedious in troubling your Lordship, and will expect your favourable answer.”³⁵

Eventually a favourable answer must have come. Elizabeth was never brought to trial, and was allowed to return to Harrowden, bring out all her rich altar furniture from its hiding place, and begin again the sort of life she had led before, with Fr. Percy in place of John Gerard. All things considered she had been fortunate thus far to have weathered the storm.

But Harrowden Hall was nearly empty. Her family had been scattered to the winds. Mary, her eldest daughter had married in 1604 ; Joyce had gone to Flanders in the previous January ; William and Henry were probably already at St. Omers, and soon her eldest son was to leave for Rome. Only the youngest daughter, Catherine, remained with her mother.

It may here be explained that when a convicted recusant could not, or would not pay the recusancy fines, two-thirds of his lands were seized, and farmed out to speculators, who paid the fines out of the rents and pocketed the rest. A recusant was said to be “granted” to the speculator for the purpose of this exploitation.

On 14 March, 1607, Elizabeth was “granted” to Sir Thomas Mounson.³⁶ She had purchased the wardship of her own son, and had control of his lands during his minority. The Vaux property at Withmale (near Little Harrowden), and at Irthlingborough, valued at more than £2,000, was in the hands of the King before Michaelmas 1607, and was being farmed by Thomas Baud of Eaton, and Giles Young respectively.³⁷ During

the next two years other adventurers were after the remainder of her property. James Cleghorn, in May, 1609, petitioned the King to be granted the recusancy of Roger Martin of Long Melford (Suffolk), and Elizabeth Vaux, who, he states, were not yet convicted. His petition was granted provided he could secure a conviction within one year.³⁸ But it was no easy matter to find the necessary evidence, and it does not appear that he was successful. Another attempt was made by Captain Robert Hitchcock of Caverfield (Bucks.), who details his military service under Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, and was now looking for some easy money.³⁹ In addition to these humiliating and crippling fines, the recusants were made to pay more than their share for the support of the King's army, and for any other special levy, while all the penal laws of Elizabeth's reign were still on the statute book, and could be invoked as occasion offered. Even so, life at Harrowden appears to have been singularly uneventful during the six years that followed the fruitless search for Gerard.

III

After the execution of Garnet, Anne Vaux remained a prisoner in the Tower, and Eleanor lay hid so secretly that her whereabouts has never come to light. White Webbs remained unoccupied, and we get a last glimpse of it in a report of Thomas Wilson, Salisbury's surveyor. It is undated, but obviously written some time in the summer of 1606:

"I understood there was commission come out of the Exchequer . . . to sell the goods that were Garnet's at White Webbs. Thither I rode for an hour or two, and saw the chief things conveyed away which were there when we first searched the house, and the remnant of small value was quickly bought up by the neighbours. Watson that owns the house had of late let it to a Londoner, but now will not let him have it, because he purposes (as the report goes) to let it again to Mrs. Vaux, which kept before by the name of Mrs. Perkins, when she comes out of the Tower. This I tell you because it is next neighbour to Theobalds [the King's house], and unfit it should be again a nest of such bad birds as it was before."⁴⁰

Fr. Garnet had been promised that Anne should not suffer for acknowledging their association. "As for the goods at your house" he wrote to her, "you know they will let you have all that is abroad [i.e. not hidden away]". This is just another example of his misplaced trust.

About 1 August Anne's faithful servant, James Johnson, was suddenly set at liberty, "it having been given out in the Tower before by the warders that he was dead."⁴¹ The following letter of Sir William Waad to Salisbury, dated 31 October, makes it evident that he was released only to serve as a decoy :

"Order being given by my Lords for the enlargement of one Johnson, a servant to Mistress Vaux, with the privity of the Lord Chief Justice I caused this Johnson after he was at liberty to be observed, wherewith I think I acquainted your Lordship. Amongst other places to the which this Johnson repaired, he often visited a house lately erected in the fields beyond the Artillery garden, which stands next to no house and as after I learnt the Lady Gray dwells in that house. Since, some of the inhabitants nearest to those parts having observed extraordinary and suspicious resort to that house, some of them resolved to watch the access ; and finding that on Saturday always in the evening divers persons in habit of gentlemen resort thither and lodging there come not forth until Sunday in the evening and scatteringly, they advertised me thereof.

"Amongst those there is one that has by secret means understood that this lady has in her hands three houses ; this in which she keeps ordinarily, another at Bethnal Green, which Catesby held, which stands in an out-place, and the third in Long Alley, which third was searched this last summer by Sir William Romney by direction from my Lord Chief Justice, but he was disappointed by reason the party sought for was hid in a secret conveyance, which shall be discovered when occasion shall serve.

"I thought it meet herewithal to acquaint your Lordship, because if search at this time may be made in those houses, especially in that where the lady lodges in the Fields, it is likely some of these traitorous persons, if they be within the realm may be found, or other of their crew. Which course, if you give order therein to my Lord Chief Justice, I will

send all the parties to his lordship, and the discreet handling of the business may give some success."⁴²

This is the last we hear of Johnson. One thing they never racked out of him was his true name. He was John Grissold of Rowington, Warwickshire,⁴³ His brother, Robert Grissold, was the humble, faithful servant of Father John Sugar, and followed him through the mire to the gallows at Warwick, where both were martyred on 16 July, 1604.⁴⁴

Anne's release from the Tower is referred to in a letter of Fr. Blunt, the acting Jesuit superior :

"Mrs. Anne is now at liberty, and saith that Father Garnet was certainly tortured, as she learneth in the Tower, and that all those reports which were bruited about him were stark false. Mr. Strange remaineth there still very constant notwithstanding his often racking and torturing, insomuch as his very enemies do highly commend him."

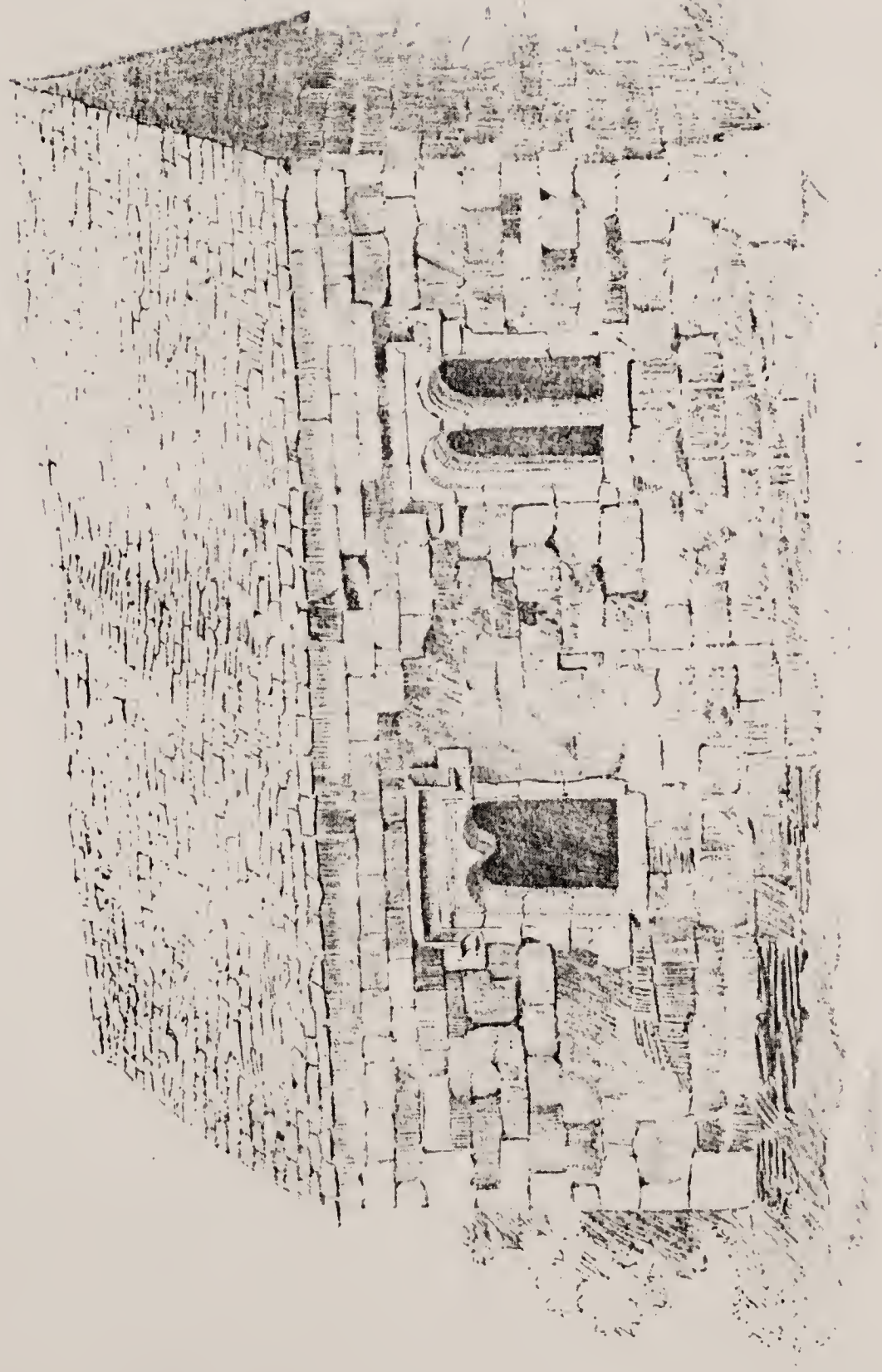
This letter is undated, but it mentions that "last Sunday morning the Spanish Ambassador's house was beset . . . to apprehend all such as came out from thence when Mass was ended." This event took place on 17 August,⁴⁵ so that the letter must have been written in the week following that date. In a postscript Fr. Blunt adds :

"Mrs. Anne is at liberty, but much discontented that she is not with Mr. Ducket [i.e. martyred with Garnet], but we have put her in good hands again, and I believe the customers [Jesuits] and she will live together, but I fear not long."⁴⁶

This last remark seems to be a reference to her failing health. If so it was a poor forecast.

Anne was in London in November, as we learn from the following depositions made before the Archbishop of Canterbury on the 27 of that month. Hugh Griffin, a tailor of Temple Bar told this strange story :

"He saith that the same day that Garnet was executed, one John Wilks, a silkman . . . brought to this examine's house a straw, with an ear upon it, which he said was one of the straws whereupon Garnet was laid when he was executed : that the straw and ear were bloody : and this examine and



VAUX CHAPEL, PRIORY FARM, SHIOBY, (LEICS.)

his wife desired to have the straw . . . that they advised with the said Wilks to have the straw put into a crystal, for the better preserving of it: [He discerned a thing like a face upon the ear of the straw and showed it to William Lord Howard and others including the Ambassadors of Spain and Venice and to a Dr. Taylor]: that this examine did show it to Mrs. Anne Vaux, when he had it from the Lord William and before he returned it back again to Dr. Taylor after he had borrowed it; that this examine lent it at that time to the said Mrs. Anne Vaux: that she had it with her a day and a half or two days: that he supposeth she showed it unto divers: that this examine was much troubled before he could get it again from Mrs. Anne Vaux . . .”

Francis Bowen, another witness tells how he was brought “to a house in Clerkenwell, where Mrs. Anne Vaux was, and one Mr. Dolman, who hath a knight to his brother: that when Anser [his companion] and this Examine came into the house the said Dolman and Mrs. Anne Vaux were looking upon the ear, being in a crystal: that upon the said Anser’s motion they let him see it: that Mr. Dolman bade him look whether he could espy the face: that he espied it in the while that the Ave Maria may be repeated: that upon his espying of it he perceived it to be a perfect face [with a long description] . . . that he first heard of the said face about a week before he saw it, and since he hath heard many Catholics talk of it, and some of them to affirm that the face was like to Garnet’s.”⁴⁷

Bartoli, however, writing within living memory, blames Anne for spreading the fame of this straw, she being “sometimes too ardent in divine things” but she had the common sense to persuade Griffin to lodge it for security with the Spanish Ambassador. He also tells us, what we might guess from her letters, that her sight was very bad.⁴⁸

This straw became very famous and was seen by most of the court including Salisbury, and with varying degrees of scepticism. A reproduction of it was printed in Brussels, where our Ambassador, Sir Thomas Edmonds, was instructed to lodge a formal complaint with the Archduke for allowing it.⁴⁹ It survived until the French Revolution, when it was unfortunately lost.

While we are on the subject of relics, we may as well introduce a document that is undated, but seems to belong to this year. It is written in a very ancient hand, evidently by an old man who had learned to write in Mary's reign. It is evidently only a part of a longer document.

"For Reliquaries. Two gold reliquaries of two of the thorns. Item a great reliquary of gold with leaves to open. Item Father Ignatius' picture of gold. Item Saint Stephen's jawbone in gold and crystal. Item a bone of St. Modwen of Burton set in gold. Item a piece of a hair shirt of St. Thomas of Canterbury set in gold. Item a thumb of Mr. Robert Sutton set in gold. Item a gold cross full of relics that was Mrs. Anne's grandmother's. Item a gold crucifix bigger than that full of relics. Item a cross of gold without a crucifix that hath little crystals. Item a reliquary of silver and gilt.

"For churchstuff a vestment of cloth of silver and embroidered cross of gold upon it, stole and maniple of the same. Item a vestment of cloth of gold, stole and maniple. Item a cope of the same. Item two tunics [dalmatics] of purple. Item a taffeta vestment with an embroidered Jesus. Item an altarcloth to that with letters about: these two things were Mr. Page's the martyr. Item a great reliquary of silver and gilt with relics with Mr. Blu[nt]. Item a great deal of brass and pewter that were Mrs. Brookesby's and Mrs. Anne's.

"Item there should be 12 feather beds with their furniture. Item a tawny rouge mantle that was Anne's Grandmother's which she must have. Item a great Brass pot to boil beef for a college."⁵⁰

The inventory is interesting for many reasons. It shows the splendour of their church furniture, even in those dangerous days. It shows also how they regarded as martyrs already those that died for the Faith. Furthermore the relics themselves are of unusual interest.

The thorns from the Crown of Thorns were brought from France by Mary Queen of Scots, carried away by her from Holyrood House, given to the Earl of Northumberland, who was executed, and who left them to the Jesuits. They were divided and put into two almost identical reliquaries by "I. Wis," almost certainly Jane Wiseman, Fr. Gerard's friend, and they remained in the

custody of the Jesuit Provincial till about 1665 when they were taken to St. Omers and later to Bruges. When the Jesuits were suppressed and their property seized by the Commissioners of Maria Teresa, who set their seals on all the cupboards, one was rescued by one of the boys, who gave it to another to bring to England. But after various adventures it came into the hands of a government official who sold it to Mr. Thomas Weld, of Lulworth, for seven guineas, and it is now at Stonyhurst. The other is at Ghent.

The thumb of Robert Sutton also has an interesting story. He was martyred at Stafford in 1587, and his quarters exposed as was the custom. His arm "was taken away secretly by the Catholics after it had been there a year, and was found quite bare. The only parts that were covered with skin and flesh were the thumb and finger, which had been anointed at his ordination with the holy oil and made still more holy by the touch of the Blessed Sacrament." This too is at Stonyhurst.

Two other of these relics were "rescued from the pillage of a monastery," but whether these are the medieval ones still at Stonyhurst it is impossible to say. All we can say is that probably none of them would be there now if they had been entrusted to less loyal and competent hands than those of the Vaux sisters.⁵¹

The two sisters spent some of their time in London during the next two years. There is a spy's report of 24 March, 1608, "touching Recusants and that sort," which mentions "Sir William Wiseman of Essex and his mother Brooksby, at his house at Bethnal Green."⁵² This may be the house of Lady Grey, to which James Johnson was dogged. But "mother Brooksby" is baffling. Eleanor was mother-in-law to Dorothy Wiseman. It would also appear that Anne was imprisoned in Newgate, but the only evidence of this is the record of her delivery by proclamation on 11 May, 1608.⁵³

But by this time another Jesuit had come into their lives and was to remain their guest for even longer than Fr. Garnet. This was Fr. William Wright. He had entered the Society in Rome in 1581, and had taught theology abroad for more than twenty years, before coming to England. He was captured in 1606 and imprisoned in the White Lion. It was a time when the plague was rampant in London, and he refused to give his word to be true prisoner. After three months he contrived to

escape. He made his way to Leicestershire, and like so many before him, found a safe refuge in the house of the two sisters.⁵⁴ This house was presumably the one at Great Ashby. It was here that Eleanor's only son William was buried on 7 June, 1606.⁵⁵ Then in 1615 Eleanor's father-in-law died. He was buried at Saxelby, the next parish to Shoby, on 12 December, and Eleanor inherited the principal Brooksby property there. The two sisters with Fr. Wright moved there immediately. This we learn from the statement made by Eleanor's grandson, Edward Thimelby, when he entered the English College at Rome. He was born in April, 1615 :

"Immediately after my birth I was carried to my grandmother, Mrs. Eleanor Brookesby into Leicestershire. She took care that I should be instructed in the Catholic faith by Fr. William Wright, and on her death, left me in charge of her sister Mrs. Anne Vaux, and under the guardianship of the said Father. I was then about ten years old."⁵⁶

For many years they appear to have kept out of trouble. The silence is once broken in 1612 when the two sisters sued Merrill Lady Tresham, widow of Sir Thomas, for the £500 which we have heard so much about before. The defendant acknowledged that the money was due but pleaded that she was in possession of none of the goods that Sir Thomas owned at the time of his death. Judgment was given for the plaintiffs, and that is the very last we ever hear of Anne's marriage portion, which had caused so much unpleasantness between the Vaux and Tresham families.⁵⁷

It is not until 1623, that their names occur in the Recusant Rolls. In that year Anne Vaux of Shoby is given among the recusants in Saxelby and its neighbourhood, and she owed £240.⁵⁸ There is a suspiciously large number of spinsters among the recusants nearby, so she had evidently not retired from active service. In 1625 she and Eleanor were convicted of recusancy at Leicester Castle, when each owed £240 for the current year (Oct. 1624-Oct. 1625). Neither of them paid.⁵⁹ Eleanor, according to her grandson, died about this time, and so in 1626 Anne's name occurs alone. Next to her in this list of local recusants is "Kellam Digby gent."⁶⁰ This may be the famous son of the conspirator, though Kenelm had been knighted

long before this, and is always said to have become a Catholic at a much later date. Perhaps it is a namesake, but it is tempting to think that Mary Digby and her two little boys, who were refused shelter at Harrowden Hall, found a home with the Vaux sisters.

The old manor house at Shoby, now called Priory Farm, still stands, though partly rebuilt. There is still a lovely mullioned window in the front, through which they could scan any unfamiliar horsemen. There is a fine old staircase and one or two good fire-places, behind one of which popish vestments are said to have been found. At the back, adjoining the kitchen, is a tumble-down stone building that is still called the Chapel. It must be viewed from the farther side, and there one may see, though almost completely hidden by bushes, two free-stone windows that were never designed for a barn or out-house: the only monument to the piety of these two heroic women. And here the two inseparable sisters kept the Faith alive for twenty years, till Eleanor died, and left Anne all alone with her memories.

CHAPTER II

MOTHER AND SON

I

AFTER his escape from England in May, 1606, Gerard had gone to Rome. On 15 May, 1609, he was sent to help in the foundation of an English novitiate in Louvain. He travelled with his old friend John Lilly, now a Jesuit himself, and on his way to England.¹ But his enemies were not to give him any peace. His presence in Flanders was soon known. On 22 July in the church of S. Gudule, Brussels, he was seen with Fr. Baldwin, standing behind a pillar, by Sir Griffin Markham who "would fain have conferred with him, but Gerard, to show his Jesuitical arrogance and niceness, did shun him as much as he could."² Perhaps he knew by this time of the treachery of Lady Markham.

On 30 August Sir Thomas Edmunds, our Ambassador at Brussels, sent a strong protest to the Archduke, against conspirators being given asylum in his dominions, "and especially a Jesuit named Father Gerard, who fled from England upon the Proclamation at the time of the Plot," and who had now returned to Flanders, "as though here was an asylum and a place of refuge for all sorts of malefactors and criminals."³ In consequence of this Baldwin, Gerard, and Hugh Owen were ordered in September to leave the Archduke's dominions. Baldwin retired to St. Omers, but Gerard changed his name to Thompson and returned to Brussels.⁴ Trumbull reports on 25 September :

"They have lately sent hither one Thompson of the Society to supply Baldwin's place, who now, six or seven hours at a time at his first coming, sweeping clean the conscience of man like a clean broom by hearing confessions, is much applauded for his sanctimony and other Loyolatical Virtues."⁵ By 12 October Trumbull knew the identity of Thompson :

"To increase the number of these bandits, Gerard is also returned to this place."⁶

On 1 November it was reported that Baldwin and Gerard were back in Louvain,⁷ and on the 15th, that they had both left for Italy.⁸ This was only partly true. Baldwin retired to the Palatine (the Rhineland) and in July, 1610,⁹ was kidnapped, brought to England, and imprisoned in the Tower on suspicion of complicity in the Gunpowder Plot. This was the priest whose ransom from a previous imprisonment had been paid by the Vaux sisters. Not even the sort of evidence that satisfied a jury in those days was forthcoming. Baldwin was never brought to trial, and was later quietly released.¹⁰

But as regards Gerard the report was true. He left for Rome probably before the end of the year, and remained there till April, 1611.¹¹ It was during these few months in Flanders, when he was being harried from pillar to post, that he wrote his wonderful autobiography.

The English Ambassador and his spies seem to have lost track of Gerard before the end of 1609, but at Christmas 1610 there was a strong rumour that he had slipped back into England. There were witnesses who deposed that he had been seen at the house of Sir John York in Nidderdale (Yorks.), but their descriptions of him are not only contradictory, but all obviously wide of the mark. One describes him as "A good thick corpulent gross man, and of a reasonable stature : another as having "black hair and grey mingled withal ; he is a man of middle stature, but not a very grown man, great boned face, and lank-shouldered of hutch-backed." They could not agree as to the year when he was supposed to have been there, though the general opinion was that it was as far back as 1606.¹² Impeccable evidence was produced that Gerard was in Rome at the time. Nevertheless, Sir John York and four of his household were sent to the Tower, tortured, and kept in solitary confinement by order of George Abbot, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in April, 1611.¹³

In March, 1612, Abbot wrote to Trumbull for information as to Gerard's movements. He states quite erroneously that Gerard had resided in England ever since the Gunpowder Plot. He wanted to know if Gerard had ever been in Italy during these years. "These things," he concludes, "concern a service of very great importance." He elicited much of the information given in the previous chapter.¹⁴

It was during these inquiries, and doubtless as part of them,

that an order was sent out in the autumn of 1611 to make another raid on Harrowden Hall, where Gerard would be likely to hide. At all events it was Salisbury himself who gave the order. The task was entrusted to Gilbert Pickering of Titchmarsh, a Justice of the Peace.

Elizabeth had handed over the control of his lands to Lord Vaux in October, 1609,¹⁵ on his attaining his majority, but while he was abroad she continued to live at Harrowden, with Fr. Percy and another Jesuit named Nicholas Hart.

Unlike William Tate who had directed the assault in 1605 with such propriety and ill-success, Pickering was not hampered by any traditions of courtesy. He came to Harrowden Hall on the vigil of All Saints

“Accompanied by a numerous posse, scaled the walls at midnight, and broke into the Fathers’ rooms before they could receive the least warning. Not content with this, he broke into the chapel close at hand, and, in the King’s name, seized the rich altar furniture, plate and vestments. Mrs. Vaux was sent to London to appear before the Council, and, after examination, was cast into the Fleet prison. The Fathers [Percy and Hart] were for some days kept in Pickering’s house.”¹⁶

Fr. More the Jesuit historian, writing half a century later, states that Elizabeth Vaux was also kept for a time in the house of Pickering, who “then conducted them, with the sacred furniture, surrounded by javelin-men, in a sort of triumph to London . . . Arriving at the Palace, London, they were taken to the Gatehouse prison, Westminster. Salisbury looking out from a window of the Palace, said, on seeing the cavalcade arrive: These are not the ones I sought for.”¹⁷ Perhaps be expected to see Fr. Gerard.

This was Salisbury’s last act of persecution. He was already a very sick man. There is in the archives of Westminster Cathedral, so near the last scene of his hatred, a horrible account of his illness, written in Latin, evidently by a priest. It claims that he was stricken in November, at the very time that he ordered the raid on Harrowden Hall. He had long suffered from what was then called the French disease, and four years before, Hugh Lee had reported from Lisbon that the papists there claimed that

Salisbury "should be stricken with a most loathsome disease which will speedily end his days, being of a consuming and rotting sort."¹⁸ He was carried to Bath in May, 1612, but all the waters of Bath could not make him clean, and he died most miserably on 24 May, stinking, paralysed, and insane. Such at least is the account given in this document.¹⁹ There is a sweeter account of his last days, written by his chaplain, in Peck's *Desiderate Curiosa*. Catholics did not mourn the death of this unscrupulous little genius, who had scourged them for twenty years, but they were to find an even more bitter persecutor in the person of George Abbot, now Archbishop of Canterbury.

But as far as the Vaux family was concerned, Salisbury's last act of hostility had been triumphant. The great citadel had fallen. The house that had sheltered so many hunted priests through more than thirty years was now empty and desolate. The magnificent chapel that Fr. Gerard had described in his autobiography written only two years before was now stripped and desecrated. Elizabeth Vaux was in the Fleet, and her two chaplains in the Gatehouse.

This episode created considerable stir. It is mentioned in many news-letters of the period, and was long remembered. When John Bridges was writing his History of Northamptonshire in 1722, he interviewed that great old character, Mrs. Elizabeth Creed of Titchmarsh, a member of the Pickering family and cousin of John Dryden. She was then aged eighty-one, and she told him of the tradition still lingering in the Pickering family, but connecting the incident with the Gunpowder Plot.

"Being Sheriff of the county he [Gilbert Pickering] was in search of them [the conspirators] at the Lord Vaux's at Harrowden, where his son John was wounded by one behind the hangings, and in danger of being killed. The Lord Vaux's house was almost pulled down by the mob."²⁰

Mrs. Creed's account is nearer the truth than most traditions. Writing to Sir Dudley Carleton on 18 November, 1611, John Chamberlain reports :

"There were certain priests or Jesuits lately taken and brought up from Mrs. Vaux's house, the Lord Vaux's mother, whose

estate is begged by the Lord Montgomery, who lies now sick of the small pox. There was some resistance in the taking of them, and one Pickering a young gentleman dangerously hurt, for which service his father was knighted on Sunday last."²¹

Evidently John Pickering's wound was serious for the rumour spread that he was dead. Writing on 13 November, to William Trumbull, John Thorys reports :

"Mrs. Vaux is in the Fleet, and the two priests in the Gatehouse, though one be not known certainly whether he be a priest or no. Young Pickering, the justice's son, is not dead nor the father knighted but brought into the Council, who thought it fit he should have some grace showed him to weigh down the disgrace that is wont to accompany this kind of service. Lord Montgomery for her good and at her request hath begged her, as is thought."²²

But this writer was mistaken about the knighthood. Gilbert Pickering was knighted at Whitehall on Sunday, 10 November.²³

The news of the fall of Harrowden reached Douai in a letter that is anonymous and undated :

"I am ashamed that we hold no better correspondence with you than we do, but you know the difficulties we travail in, and I am much afraid we shall have a sharp winter which is already begun with some storms : Mrs. Vaux her house surprised, her altar taken and two Jesuits Mr. John Percy and one Mr. Hart."²⁴

The news soon reached Brussels and sent Lord Vaux racing back to England. Elizabeth's sister, Lady Lovell, who was living in Brussels at the time, went to the Archduke to beg his intercession. On "Le dernier jour du mois de Decembre" which would be 21 December in England, the Archduke Albert wrote to his "Tres haut, tres excellent et tres puissant Prince, mon tres cher aimé bon frère et Cousin" King James stating that

"Dame Mary Lovell having represented to me the state and imprisonment of her sister Dame Elizabeth Vaux for having incurred the penalty attached to the laws of your kingdoms against those who receive priests of the Catholic religion, and

that this prisoner would be reduced to a pitiable state, We are moved to make this request to Your Majesty and to beg you to moderate the rigour of the laws, release her from prison and also accord her the restoration of her goods : trusting to the native goodness and sweet nature of Your Majesty, and especially in regard to her sex."

The letter is signed, in the Archduke's own hand :

"De Vre Ma^{te}

Tres affectionne frere et cousin

Albert."²⁵

The effect of this personal letter from one sovereign to another was nil.

II

Lord Vaux's first care when he reached England was to make it as difficult as possible for the King to seize his property. The only way this could be done was to transfer the estates to trustees who were friendly and honest, but not themselves convicted recusants. Sometimes such trustees immediately conveyed the property to other trustees and so on, till the legal position was so complicated that there was hope of years of litigation before the King, who was always hard up and in need of ready cash, could reap any profit from it.

There are few purely legal documents that are as full of interest as the deed of conveyance drawn up for Lord Vaux and dated 26 January, 1612.²⁶

"Whereas . . . Lord Vaux . . . standeth indebted to divers and sundry persons named in a schedule . . . annexed, in divers and sundry great sums of money, . . . and whereas also Katherine Vaux, his sister, is as yet unprovided in any present maintenance, or of any portion of money wherewith to advance her in a competent marriage . . . Lord Vaux . . . in consideration of a certain competent sum of money . . . hath bargained and sold, demised and to farm let . . . all his manors of Harrowden Magna, Harrowden Parva, Orlingbury, Burton Latimer, Mears Ashby, Laxton Engham, Wilby and Irthlingborough . . . for and during the time and term of eleven years." The trustees are to pay Katherine Vaux £1500 on her marriage or when she reaches the age of nineteen.

But what makes this document so interesting is Lord Vaux's choice of trustees. The first was Sir George Shirley of Astwell (Northants.). His name has already occurred, as the trustee of Eleanor Brookesby's property of Great Ashby. The second was Sir George Fermor of Easton Neston who had been called to Harrowden just after the Gunpowder Plot and had been so angry with Elizabeth Vaux for making a fool of him. The third was Sir Richard Weynman of Thame (Oxon.) who had, at the same period, strongly expressed his dislike for Elizabeth, who had perverted his wife while he was away soldiering in Flanders. The fourth was none other than William Tate of Delapré, who had conducted the nine-day search at Harrowden in a fruitless attempt to find Fr. Gerard. It makes one wonder how sincere these gentlemen were in their denunciation of Elizabeth, when five years later so much trust is reposed in them by Lord Vaux.

Having settled or unsettled his affairs Lord Vaux merely waited to be arrested. Meanwhile his mother remained in prison in the Fleet. On 19 February she was arraigned at the Old Bailey. The indictment is still extant in the Guildhall.

"The Jury present that Elizabeth Vaux . . . in the Justice Hall, situated and existing in the Old Bailey in the parish of St. Sepulchre's . . . in full general session of jail delivery . . . before James Pemberton, knight, Mayor of the said city, the reverend Father in Christ John, Bishop of London, and Henry Montague . . . was required to take and pronounce on the holy Gospel of God a certain oath contained and specified [in 3 Jac. ch. 1] . . . entitled *An Act for the better discovering and repressing of popish recusants*, and that the same Elizabeth Vaux obstinately . . . refused to take that oath as it was proffered her."²⁷

Before going further it is necessary to explain that the oath which Elizabeth refused was not the Oath of Supremacy of 1559, which her father-in-law and Sir Thomas Tresham had so often refused, but the new Oath of Allegiance of 1606. The former stated that the Queen was supreme in spiritual matters, and of course no Catholic could take this and remain a Catholic. Men like Tresham and Vaux were only too ready to swear their civil allegiance, but were never given the chance. There was always this clause about the Queen's spiritual supremacy which made

the whole oath unlawful for Catholics. The new Oath of Allegiance, framed soon after the Powder Plot, with the expert aid of an apostate Jesuit, was much more subtle, and was designed to split the Catholic body. It does not refer to the King as Head of the Church, but it categorically denies the deposing power of the Pope, and denounces as "impious and heretical, this damnable doctrine and position, that princes which be excommunicated or deprived by the Pope may be deposed or murdered by their subjects." The Jesuits and many of the other clergy declared the oath unlawful, because it claimed the authority to determine the extent of papal power, and ventured to condemn a position as *heretical*, thus usurping the prerogative of the Church. There were other subtle snares. Words of very different meaning were placed in juxtaposition as though they were more or less synonymous,—“excommunicated or deprived,” “deposed or murdered.” All would have agreed that to murder a prince in any circumstances was damnable; but it does not follow that to depose him is therefore damnable, merely because the Oath chooses to couple the two words together.

There were, however, many among the secular clergy and others who thought that the oath might be interpreted in an orthodox sense. In 1607 the Pope declared it unlawful, but in spite of this George Blackwell, the Archpriest, who was in prison at the time, announced that notwithstanding its condemnation it might lawfully be taken by Catholics, and he took it himself. For this act he was deposed from office in the following year. His subsequent treatment must have convinced Catholics of the dishonourable motives that brought this oath into being. The King was graciously pleased not to hang Blackwell for being a priest, but the old man was left to languish five more years in the Clink, and died there on 25 January, 1612.²⁸ Nothing but complete and abject apostacy would satisfy. The oath was designed merely as a further measure of persecution.

Even after the papal condemnation, the legality of this oath was hotly disputed, and there was the usual battle of books. A Benedictine named Thomas Preston wrote a defence of it, under the pseudonym of Roger Widdrington, and the King issued an explanation of it that only added to the chaos and uncertainty.

During 1612 in particular, numbers of good Catholic layfolk

all over the country took the oath. Four of the servants at Harrowden including Francis Swetnam, the baker, and Alice his wife, took it at Kettering on 16 September.²⁹ But we have to be careful not to take this as a denial of their Faith. George Birket, who was now Archpriest writes to Rome in October :

“Numbers of Catholics present themselves to justices, their friends : they offer the oath to be read and bid them take it in what sense they will. They take it only in respect to allegiance, but the justices certify by bill to the judges that they have taken the parliament oath.”³⁰

But there were some, especially among the friends of the Jesuits, who considered the oath absolutely unlawful, and had the courage of their convictions. Elizabeth Vaux was one of them. From various letters sent at this time to Rome we may cull a few details of her trial. Two men were brought to the bar with her ; Henry Maylard, a priest (though this could never be proved) and Richard Kirkham, a “western gentleman.” The trial lasted from eight in the morning till eight at night.³¹ The Bishop of London and the Recorder were on the bench. “They all answered stoutly and with great courage . . . Maylard pressed the Bishop and Recorder of London so learnedly that they could not answer him, and took him for a priest, but he put them to the proof thereof.”³² “He made the Bishop of London, then on the bench, instead of store of logic and divinity, to show great want of both, but the Recorder helped London out by calling Mr. Mallard a proud, arrogant man, and telling him he came not thither to dispute, but to swear in judgment in *præmunire*.”³³ Elizabeth “offered to have sworn all loyalty to the King, yea, though the Pope should excommunicate Him.” She “is praised both for her discreetness and constancy, who having long, yet with tediousness, as by signs she showed and the Bishop of London took notice, stayed the end of his speech, which was to limit the rigour of the oath and to signify that the King had no other intent in it than to secure himself of his subjects’ loyalty and truth, she made answer that notwithstanding his speech, the oath to be taken was to be taken ‘voluntarily, godly, with all good will, according to the very words and sense of them, without mental reservation or any least equivocation,’ whereto they also did swear that took it. And, forasmuch as

there was contained matter of learning, not yet discussed among the learned, about the pope's power to depose princes, she being unlearned durst not with safe conscience take it. Yet if they pleased to take her oath of allegiance whereby she might swear her integrity from disloyalty and secure, as she thought, the King from fear of her, she offered to swear further to him, notwithstanding any excommunication of the Pope granted against him. But when this would not suffice she said if she had had money wherewith to have purchased her freedom, she should not have needed further to have been urged."³⁴

These long hours of argument were all part of the mummary, and had no effect on the verdict. The cold, official sentence still remains on record :

"At the sessions held on the 19 February, 1612, the under-named Elizabeth Vaux, in the custody of Edward Barkam and George Smythes, Sheriffs of the City of London, being brought to the bar there in her proper person and asked by the Court here how she would acquit herself concerning the premisses above imputed to her, says that she is not guilty in the manner and form as is supposed by the above Indictment, but utterly refused to put herself upon her country concerning this, or to give any answer to the Court here in exoneration of the indictment aforesaid.

"Therefore it is decreed by the same Court, that all the lands, tenements, goods and chattels of the aforesaid Elizabeth Vaux shall be forfeited to the said Lord the King, and that she, Elizabeth Vaux shall suffer the imprisonment of her body during the good pleasure of the said Lord the King, according to the form of the statute in a case of this kind made and provided."³⁵

Lord Vaux himself had been arrested towards the end of February, 1612, and on March 1st was arraigned before the Privy Council at Westminster. He was only twenty-three and it must have been an ordeal to appear, alone and without counsel, before so many high officials of the realm. There was George Abbot, recently made Archbishop of Canterbury, whose encounter with Fr. John Gerard has been already recorded. There was Lord Ellesmere, the Lord Chancellor, who, as Thomas Egerton, has been one of those who had passed judgment on William

Lord Vaux and Sir Thomas Tresham in the Star Chamber in 1581. There was Henry Howard, 1st Earl of Northampton, who, alone of the council, seems to have been friendly with Elizabeth Vaux, and who was suspected of being secretly a papist. There was his brother Charles Howard, 1st Earl of Nottingham, the Lord High Admiral who had led the English fleet against the Armada. There were Gilbert Talbot 7th Earl of Shrewsbury and Edward Somerset 4th Earl of Worcester. There was William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, to whom the first folio of Shakespeare was to be dedicated in 1623. There was Thomas Erskine, Viscount Fenton, who had been brought up with the King and had become his favourite. There was William Lord Knollys, later to be Earl of Banbury, who had married the young lady originally chosen for Lord Vaux himself. The other members present were Edward 1st Baron Wootton, Sir Julius Caesar, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir Thomas Parry, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

The Archbishop proffered the oath. Lord Vaux, like his mother refused it, "a bad example to our other faithful subjects, in contempt of Ourselves, and against the form of the Statute in such cases provided."³⁶ He was committed to the Fleet prison, to await his trial.

John Chamberlain the indefatigable letter-writer mentions Lord Vaux's imprisonment in his letters of 21 March, but again it is to the Catholic newsletters, sent to Douai and Rome and now preserved at Westminster Cathedral, that we must go for fuller details. From these letters which are too numerous and too long to quote in full, we learn that Lord Vaux, before his appearance at the Council-table had a private conference with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Finding him chary of taking an oath which was condemned by all his Jesuit friends, the Archbishop ordered him to confer with Fr. Preston who had recently published a book upholding the lawfulness of taking the oath. The true author of this work was evidently still unknown to the Catholics. The sequel may be told in a letter to Fr. Thomas More, written on 21 March. The words in italics are underlined in the original.

"I am sorry for Fr. Preston. The Lord Vaux was enjoined to confer with him about the oath. He would neither persuade



1611
160
Eustache, respectant, et respectant Prince mon cousin
et cousin bon frere et cousin, ayant Dame Marie Louise
represente l'estat de l'emprisonnement de sa sœur Dame Elizabeth
Vaix, pour avoir encouru la peine portee par les loys de voz Roiaumes
contre ceux qui se convertissent hors de la Religion Catholique, et
qui feroient prisonniers soit reduire a un plus vray estat, nous
sommes este meuz a faire ceste a Vre Ma^{te}, et la priu (ben voyant
la rigueur des loys) la relasche de prison, ensemble luy accorder
la main levee des ses biens. Et qui attendant de la pitié bonhe
et doulce nature de Vre Ma^{te}, mismes en favorable esgard a son
sper, Je ne mistendray Joy davanthage, quo pour plus d'ice
de continuer Jette.

Eustache, respectant, et respectant Prince mon cousin et
cousin bon frere et cousin, en parfaite sante a longue vie,
me recommandant affectueusement a voz bonnes graces. Ainsy fait
le d'icelle Jours du mois de Decembre 1611.
De Vre Ma^{te}.

Tre affectionne frere et cousin.

Albert



1. The first part of the book is devoted to a general
 description of the country and its inhabitants.
 2. The second part contains a detailed account of the
 history of the country from the earliest times to the
 present day.
 3. The third part is a collection of laws and
 customs of the country.
 4. The fourth part is a collection of poems and
 songs of the country.
 5. The fifth part is a collection of stories and
 legends of the country.
 6. The sixth part is a collection of scientific
 facts and observations of the country.
 7. The seventh part is a collection of
 statistical data of the country.
 8. The eighth part is a collection of
 geographical facts and observations of the country.
 9. The ninth part is a collection of
 historical facts and observations of the country.
 10. The tenth part is a collection of
 literary facts and observations of the country.

11. The eleventh part is a collection of
 scientific facts and observations of the country.
 12. The twelfth part is a collection of
 statistical data of the country.
 13. The thirteenth part is a collection of
 geographical facts and observations of the country.
 14. The fourteenth part is a collection of
 historical facts and observations of the country.
 15. The fifteenth part is a collection of
 literary facts and observations of the country.

The end of the world is near.

The end of the world is near.

nor dissuade him, but rather wished him not to take it. At his return to the bishop he asked whether he would take it or no. He denied [refused] it. The bishop demanded what Mr. Preston said unto him. He told him as before. Then the bishop raged and was much offended against him, and said in the hearing of the said lord Vaux and of a great number of people that Preston *was a traitor both to the King and the Pope* because he *made the book which he fathered upon Widdrington*. This maketh a great stir here amongst us, and you may be sure it is there with you before this will come unto you. Wherefore I do not [doubt] but that you may signify this much to our Superiors, the thing being so notorious as it is.

"I have told you that Mrs. Vaux was condemned in the praemunire, and yet she answered that she would swear her allegiance albeit the King were excommunicated. My Lord Vaux answered that he would take the oath according to the King's interpretation, and yet neither of those modifications would be accepted. The Lord Montague denied it absolutely and was therefore fined in £6,000, and my Lord Vaux must also compound in the end, or else he will lose all."³⁸

The same writer reports ten days later :

"The Lord Vaux and his mother are still in Newgate. Some say they have absolutely denied the oath, which is most like because of their endurance."³⁹ But on the same day another correspondent to Fr. More says :

"I hear that Mrs. Vaux is condemned in a praemunire, and my Lord Vaux committed to the Fleet and persecution in England very great upon Catholics their goods. God send us better news."⁴⁰

Although this last letter is written from Florence the writer seems better informed. Lord Vaux was not in Newgate, but in the Fleet, where his grandfather had languished so long. Mrs. Vaux was in the custody of the Keeper of Newgate, but lodged nearby, presumably in a private house, though one letter refers to her as actually in Newgate, and another says "a prison near Newgate."

Many letters during the succeeding months refer more to Lord Vaux's finances than to his conscience : how was he to

save his estates from confiscation? A letter to Fr. More of 11 April informs us that

“My Lord Montgomery [Philip Herbert, later Earl of Pembroke] hath begged the Lord Vaux [i.e. the control of two-thirds of his lands]. What the composition will be, that is as yet not known. Surely many will be overthrown both spiritually and temporally about this oath—temporally in refusing, spiritually if they take it.”⁴¹

Fr. More was informed on 27 April that

“My Lord Vaux and his mother are yet in prison. It is thought my Lord will compound with the King, but his mother (as the rumour goeth) will rather make choice of imprisonment.”⁴²

Lord Vaux was brought to trial on 14 May, in the King's Bench. A full account will be found in an appendix. His judges were Sir Thomas Fleming, Lord Chief Justice, Sir Henry Hobart, Attorney General, Sir David Williams and Sir John Cooke, judges of the King's Bench, and Sir Christopher Yelverton. Lord Vaux asked for Counsel and was refused. He then claimed to be tried by his peers, but this too was refused. Justice Yelverton then pronounced judgment upon him.

“To be out of the King's protection, his lands, tenements, goods and chattels to be perpetually forfeited to the King, and for to be imprisoned during his life.”

III

The news of Lord Vaux's condemnation spread like wildfire. John Chamberlain sent it abroad to Sir Dudley Carleton and Sir Ralph Winwood, and doubtless to other of his correspondents at foreign courts. His letter is dated 20 May, 1612.

“On Thursday last the Lord Vaux was condemned at the King's Bench in a praemunire for refusing the oath of allegiance, whereby he loseth all his goods and fee simple lands for ever, and entailed lands for life, as likewise his liberty, being sent from the place prisoner to the King's Bench, though he made entreaty it might be changed to the Fleet.”⁴³

The news was known in Brussels by 26 May.⁴⁴ It was sent to Rome in a letter of 17 June.

"The King is in much anxiety on account of the Baron Vaux. The murmurs are very general against the cruelty used towards him in his condemnation, and much more for the little respect that is paid to him in prison. Not only the nobles who are favourably disposed towards the Catholic religion, but the heretical peers themselves feel and regard it as a common insult to their grade. It is no wonder that such signal constancy as the good Baron displays should cause anxiety to his Majesty. It will be seen by a letter which he wrote to a lord, a friend of his, and a favourite of the King, that they have endeavoured to interfere in his behalf with his Majesty."⁴⁵

The letter in question, preserved only in an Italian version, is dated 3 June, and is addressed probably to Lord Rochester:

"I trust to the good feelings of your lordship and my other friends towards me, that you will readily believe that I am very far from estimating their trouble and kind offices in my behalf by the success of the event, because I well know that all human diligence and schemes are subject to the Providence of God and his Blessed Mother. All is disposed of according to His good pleasure, and certainly as regards myself, I embrace my fate as the most felicitous and welcome one that could have befallen me. And although the sentence already passed upon me is executed with all rigour, so that I may be left without a farthing, yet do I not esteem the obligation I owe to your Lordship and your family a jot the less. The consolation that I feel in my present state far exceeds anything that I have ever before experienced during the whole course of my life, and that which at another time would have proved most vexatious to me, is now most pleasant, seeing that there is no evil odour in this prison, but what affords the matter of consolation and content. So great is the bounty of God our Lord towards the man, that finding himself in the poorest condition, He sends him that which surpasses the treasures of this world. Most certainly if I feel any pain, it is solely because I have no more to lose for the love of God.

"May your Lordship retain me in your good graces etc. Yours as ever, though now of little worth.

Baron Vaux."⁴⁶

"My Lord Vaux" wrote a priest to Fr. More on 20 June, "is condemned in praemunire and adjudged to be forth of the King's protection and hath been very hardly used in the King's Bench, notwithstanding he offered to take the oath according to the King's interpretation in his book, and of others, concerning only temporal allegiance which would not be admitted. And it is thought they cannot vize on his lands, the estate before hath been so conveyed, and a composition is thought will be admitted at length. Divers are named to have begged him."⁴⁷

Another letter in Italian preserved in the Vatican Archives sent to Fr. Thomas Fitzherbert, also refers to the harsh treatment :

"By letters of the 31st of May I have news from England that on the previous day [*sic*] Lord Vaux was condemned to lose everything and to suffer perpetual imprisonment for his constancy in refusing the oath of allegiance, as they call it. The very heretics lament this cruelty. I have news that for his Lordship's greater dishonour the cause was tried in the King's Bench, in which court hitherto no nobleman has appeared, as their causes belong to the Star Chamber."⁴⁸

In July Sir Julius Caesar, Chancellor of the Exchequer got down to the really serious business of seeing how much of Lord Vaux's wealth he could obtain for the King. What appear to be his notes are still extant. The position was as follows.

"A true note of the Right Honourable the Lord Harrowden his revenue as it is at this present (July 22, 1612).

	£	s.	d.
The manor of Great Harrowden is worth per annum	254.	18.	0
The demesnes is worth per annum	200.	0.	0
The manor of Little Harrowden	30.	0.	0
The manor of Burton Latimer	88.	11.	0
The manor of Orlingbury	37.	5.	0
The manor of [Mears] Ashby	37.	13.	4
The manor of Laxton Engaine	31.	10.	0
The manor of Irthlingborough with the demesnes	200.	16.	8

	£	s.	d.
Some tenements in Wilby	80.	0.	0
Some tenements in Doddington	26.	0.	0
One farm in Withmal	60.	0.	0
The manors of Laxton and Allerton [Notts.]	40.	0.	0
The wood sales	90.	0.	0
The chief rent of all the manors	19.	0.	0
<hr/>			
The total sum is	£1153.	12.	8
<hr/>			

[The Chancellor's arithmetic is somewhat arbitrary].
 out of which he payeth yearly
 for annuities and interest £650 yearly.

after 26 years purchase £13298. 0. 0
 the now rate of sale there
 out of which, if his debts
 be abated, amounting to £8380. 0. 0

There will remain £4918. 0. 0

In the list of debts are £1,500 owing to Sir George Simeon, perhaps the dowry of Mary Vaux whom he had married in 1604; £600 to Owen Doddin who has already appeared as a recusant in Wellingborough; £200 to Mr. Ball the merchant, probably of Wellingborough; £400 to Sir Oliver Manners; £1,000 to his two brothers; £3,600 "to his two sisters for their portions," and £400 "to Mr. Hicks the prisoner upon bond, forfeited."

In spite of his huge debts, there was still a substantial sum, the equivalent of £50,000 of our money, to be realized by the sale of Vaux's property, for the benefit of the King. At least there was a substantial sum on paper, but, as we have seen, Lord Vaux had conveyed most of his lands to trustees, and all that the King could confiscate without long legal process is contained in the following schedule. It is difficult to believe that the government were entirely satisfied with the alleged purposes of some of these highly suspicious objects.

"Inprimis, in ready money, parcel of his Lordship's rents	£23. 0. 0
Item, one cross of gold given to his Lordship when he was very young, in value worth	£300
Item, one other cross of ebony, in value worth	£10
Item, in plate, three pair of silver candlesticks, one basin of silver parcel gilt, three double gilt cups, two with covers. One plate of silver double gilt, one pair of silver snuffers, one pair of cruets of silver for oil and vinegar, parcel gilt, a plate of silver with letters of Jesus in gilt, one silver bell to call servants, in value worth	£55
Four boxes of wax candles for the table, worth	£6. 13. 7
Item two crimson copes left by the ancestors of the house, worth	£100
Item, my Lord's library of books, worth	£100
Item, one book of purple velvet in pictures of the life of Christ	£10
Item, one picture in glass of the Resurrection of our Saviour	£5 ⁵⁰

Well might Sir Julius Caesar have said with his more famous namesake: "Would he were fatter!" He wrote personally to the King, on 14 August, a letter which shows how much more interested they both were in Lord Vaux's wealth, than in his scruples of conscience:

"And first, touching those of whom the law hath taken hold by a legal conviction, namely, the Lord Vaux, his mother, Sir Henry James, and William Vavasour of Yorkshire, of whose estates commissions are awarded to enquire; so many questions usually arise either before the commissioners, or upon the finding of offices, or before the barons of the exchequer, in point of pleading such evidence, as either by them or their ancestors have formerly been made to prevent the penalty of the law, that I doubt much that in these and the like will be found only a state for term of life. So it would be considered whether the issues of their lands, which can be paid but half-yearly, or the fines which they may be drawn presently

to pay your Majesty (especially to redeem their liberty) may be of better value . . .

"At the present my Lord Vaux his tenants offer, for the discharge of him and his mother and their forfeitures and imprisonments £2,000, Vavasour £700, Middleton and Towneley, to be released of the oath £1,000.

"Of these, what your Majesty shall please to accept, the same may be disposed to your own necessities, which are extreme and pressing: or otherwise, as to your highness shall be thought fit."

Next day he wrote again.

"The process gone out against the lands and goods of the Lord Vaux and his mother, Sir Henry James and William Vavasour will not be returnable till Michaelmas term next." He then repeats their offers.⁵¹

Apparently they were not accepted, for another commission was appointed on 18 December, 1612, to enquire into the property of Lord Vaux forfeited to the Crown, and it declared invalid all conveyances made since 1 March, the date of his arraignment.⁵²

But Lord Vaux had been too quick for them. He had conveyed his property on 26 January.

CHAPTER III

NEWGATE

I

SALARIED civil servants are a comparatively modern development. In former times practically all government posts were "offices of profit." They were leased by the Crown like real property, and the holder made what he could out of them. Such was the office of keeper of a prison. The holder was expected to make a living out of his prisoners. Where the prisoners were poor the job had few attractions, but when they were people of means, as were so many of the recusants, there was quite a good income to be derived by one means or another. Nor did the customary means strike anyone as particularly foul. Unlike modern concentration camps, such prisons as the Fleet and Wisbech made the inmates pay at a high rate for their food. There was usually a fair profit to be made by the keeper, and of course he could always make a bit more by depriving them of the food they had paid for. Thus Fr. Garnet records that at Wisbech the prisoners were fed only three days a week. This particular prison, full of priests, the Bishop of Ely considered sufficiently lucrative to give to his own brother. But the chief source of income for the keeper came from bribes. There was practically nothing that could not be purchased in this way, including an occasional night out.

Newgate prison was no exception. The keeper in 1606 was one Simon Houghton, an easy-going and accommodating individual with a wife who was or at least later became, an obstinate papist. Within a year of the Gunpowder Plot the papists were behaving with scandalous impudence. Not only were the priests in Newgate saying Mass, but large numbers of Catholics were going into the prison to hear Mass.¹ The only person who seems to have minded was the Rev. George Abbot, then Dean of Winton, who constantly reported this laxity to the Privy Council. At length in 1607 the Archbishop of Canterbury [Richard Bancroft] decided to take a firm line, and sent a pursuivant,

euphemistically called a messenger, named John Tarbock to spy out the land. Tarbock took with him his own servant named Francis Harris. He hung about Newgate for a couple of months, "especially on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and other principal days and times thought to be most fit for his purpose, for the apprehending and taking of such persons as did then repair thither to hear Mass, there being at that time divers popish priests, prisoners in the said prison of Newgate, that had taken their orders by authority from the See of Rome."² At last they were rewarded.

"Upon Monday the 29th day of June last past [1607], being St. Peter's day . . . were taken by the said John Tarbock and others, certain popish persons to the number of thirty or thereabouts, some men and some women (who were then all present together in a room of the said prison hearing one Oswald Needham, a popish priest, say Mass)."

The culprits were all made to appear at the next quarter sessions and were sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of one hundred marks each.³ That should have taught them a lesson, but the sequel will show how one popish recusant got his own back. I have slightly condensed the narrative,⁴ but only by leaving out the legal redundancies.

"May it please your Excellent Majesty that one William Chapman (servant and factor to a merchant here of London) being a known recusant and a man noted beforetime to have resorted to places where Mass was said, and to have spoken scandalous words both against the State and the proceedings of this kind in form of law against popish recusants, upon [Sunday] 27 December last [1607] near the Royal Exchange, London, met with one Francis Harris a servant unto John Tarbock, which Harris was present at the time and place aforesaid in Newgate prison where all the parties were at Mass, and heard Oswald Needham say Mass.

"Chapman, desiring with Francis Harris and insinuating himself into his company, as they passed along the street by St. Bartholomew's Church, on the back side the Royal Exchange the people in the Church being then at divine service and singing a psalm, Chapman most profanely and wickedly said

unto Harris: 'Hark! What a company of yelping whelps here be', meaning them that sang the psalms in the church.

"And after that Chapman grew into divers other words and terms very unfit for him to speak. And presently after that, he grew into outrageous words and terms with Harris saying: 'Thou rogue and villain,' with other like speeches, 'thou art one of them that gave evidence at the sessions holden in the Old Bailey the second day of October last, against the poor recusants for hearing of Mass in Newgate,' threatening him that he would make him repent himself for so doing.

"And after many words spent between them, Chapman, the better (as it seemeth) to work his pretended purpose, began to curry favour and to give good words unto Harris and persuaded to be friends with him. And that they might part friends, and to the intent he might make Harris forgetful what wicked and scandalous words he had spoken, drew him into a wine tavern commonly called the St. John's Head in Whitecross Street in the parish of St. Giles without Cripplegate, where they dined together.

"And before they arose from the table Chapman (as it seemeth the better to bring his pretence to pass) took some tobacco out of his pocket and gave a pipe-full unto Harris, bidding him drink some of that the while until more came, and thereupon called the boy of the tavern and bade him go fetch some more tobacco, which tobacco Chapman had so prepared and infused something into it, purposely to intoxicate Harris, for so soon as he had drunk thereof, and of the wine which Chapman had prepared for him, he fell into a drowsy dead sleep and had his senses clean taken away.

"And Harris (by this means practised by Chapman) being cast into a sleep and his head so intoxicated, as he was not sensible of anything, Chapman did then and there cut long crosses on the shoulders of the back of the doublet which then he had on his back, and did also cut certain pieces out of the wings of his doublet, being black silk rash, laced, and did then also cut divers pieces out of the skirts of his cloak, the same being laced about, and cut out pieces out of the cloak behind, up towards the shoulders. And further he did then and there cut off the corners of the shirt-band that he had then about his neck, and did then and there cut his hat and

hat-band, and make at least a dozen long cuts and slashes therein. And further, of his devilish and spiteful malice not herewith satisfied, but more to fulfil his revengeful and wicked mind, he did then and there also cut off all the hair from the crown of the head of Francis Harris close to the skull, the breadth of a man's hands, and so as he was enforced to wear a nightcap on his head most commonly for a whole month after, until his hair was somewhat grown out again."

William Chapman should have then gone quietly home, but the temptation to see the joke through was irresistible, as becomes clear from the interrogatories addressed to him.

"Did you not the same night after bring Harris home unto his brother-in-law's house, and did not you there laugh and storm at him and show his brother and sister the foresaid cuts and slashes or some of them? And did not you on the morrow next following when you were arrested by warrant from Sir Henry Montague, knight, Recorder of London, for the said abuses say (to one John Tarbock in the street waiting for Mr. Recorder coming home) that you thought that the devil procured you thereunto, and did not you confess that you did cut and slash Harris' clothes, and said you would pay for them?"

So Chapman was arrested and committed to Newgate, to await his trial at the next session at the Old Bailey. In due course a bill of indictment was preferred against him, but he procured a writ of Habeas Corpus "to remove his body and the cause unto the court of King's Bench, and by that means set himself at liberty."

Harris then called him before Star Chamber. He denied all that he could, but there were some charges that it would have been futile to deny. He said that as they passed St. Bartholomew's church the preacher was "making of his sermon" and there was no psalm-singing in progress. He says further that Harris did all the "insinuating" and entreated him to go to a tavern near Blackwell Hall, "and that Harris would bestow a pint of wine upon him. And he, Chapman, affirmed that he was unwilling to go into any Tavern to drink wine because it was in time of divine service and trouble might come of it. Harris replied that he had authority or warrant to search for

seminary priests, and that he would call at the said tavern to make search there for a seminary priest and that therefore he would warrant him that he should not run into any trouble about going into the tavern at that time. Harris did at the tavern bestow a pint of wine upon him, and afterwards, further insinuating himself into acquaintance with Chapman, drew him into another tavern called the St. John's Head in Whitecross Street, and there they dined together with a capon."

Chapman denies the whole accusation about the tobacco, and says that Harris "did call unto the boy of the tavern to fetch him some tobacco and a tobacco pipe . . . and took and drank of the same tobacco and none other. They both drank so plentifully of the tobacco and of wines and drinks brought unto them by the boy, that they became both drunk and that Harris fell into a slumber, and that he (Chapman), as he verily thinketh, cut the shirt-band, hat and hat-band . . . none being present when the same was done but only Harris and himself, neither was the same done of any malicious purpose but confesseth that he foolishly did it, being overtaken with drink, for the which he was very heartily sorry when he came to himself."

What happened to Chapman we are not informed, but the Mass in Newgate was a black mark against Simon Houghton the keeper. There were other black marks as well, and on 25 November, 1612, while Elizabeth Vaux was in Newgate, he was tried in the Star Chamber on what I suppose we must call charges of inefficiency.

"Whereas divers persons have been committed to Newgate, which persons were known to be Jesuits and Jesuited priests and persons most dangerous to the state, and other popish priests which endeavour principally to withdraw by persuasions Your Majesty's subjects from their due obedience, for which cause, as they have been committed to the gaol of Newgate, so the said Houghton while he was gaoler there hath been most straitly charged to look unto such prisoners and not suffer them to go at liberty or out of the same gaol nor to permit any to resort unto them in the gaol otherwise than to bring them relief and things necessary for their sustenance: yet hath Simon Houghton wittingly and willfully suffered the popish priests ordinarily to have public Masses to be said and

sung in the said prison, and permitted many of your Majesty's subjects to resort unto the said priests and there they have heard and been present at Masses.

"And while Houghton was keeper of the said gaol he made it rather a chapel for superstitious service than a prison or gaol for the strait keeping of such manner of persons. And by the ordinary access that your subjects have had to popish priests in the said prison, many are fallen away and are become recusants and will not come to church to hear divine service. And the wife of the said Houghton hath been so conversant with the said popish priests, and such a reliever of them, as she is become an obstinate recusant and hath been made the means to get for the priests what liberty they would desire at their gaoler's hands.

"And Simon Houghton, during the time he was suffered to be keeper of Newgate would ordinarily suffer such as were committed as priests and known to be popish priests and Jesuits, to go out of the prison into the city of London and places where they listed near about London, and work what mischief they could to this your kingdom and state, and then would receive them again, concealing and dismissing their going abroad, which was often made known to your Majesty by the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury that now is.

"And at such time as your Majesty pleased to command that one Bartholomew Legatt, who was committed prisoner to Newgate for an Arian heretic, should be brought before your Majesty. To which end, on or about the ninth day of November which was in the ninth year of your Highness' Reign in England [1611], as your Majesty appointed, Simon Houghton did also contrary to the duty of his place, suffer Legatt usually to lie, remain and be at his own will and pleasure, all night and many nights out of prison during the time of his commitment. Which Legatt according to the ecclesiastical laws of this your realm was afterwards convicted, adjudged and burnt to death for a dangerous heretic."

After a further accusation of allowing many recusants "to walk and lodge abroad at their free liberties and pleasures without any lawful warrant or authority so to do," Houghton is finally charged with negligence.

"Through his wasteful and disordered course of life he, being run into many men's debts hath lyen prisoner in execution in other prisons, when he should have attended the office of gaolership, by which means your Majesty's service and the due execution of Justice was much hindered."⁵

Bartholomew Legatt was burnt at Smithfield, by sentence of Archbishop Abbott, on 18 March, 1612. On Easter eve, 11 April, another Arian William Wightman was burnt at Lichfield. These were the last victims of heresy to be burnt in England. But there were still many pages of our history to be written in the blood of witches and papists.

II

With such an obliging gaoler it is not surprising that Elizabeth Vaux was able to get to Mass in Newgate. What is surprising is that she had to wait so long for the opportunity. A report preserved in the Vatican archives, made up from three letters from England states that

"The mother of Lord Vaux, having been a long time in prison without the consolation of the sacraments, begged the Jesuit Fathers to send her some Father who was not known, to hear her confession and give her communion."⁶

But this report goes on to give a far from accurate account of what happened, and may perhaps be inaccurate in this particular as well. A more reliable account is contained in a letter of 17 August, 1612, written to the Jesuit General by Fr. Gerard from Louvain :

"Lord Vaux remains in prison, under condemnation, but by no means cast down. He seems with invincible courage to trample on rather than to be deprived of the world, and not so much to have lost as to have condemned its good things. His praise is certainly in the mouths of all men. And his cause is so honourable to him and to the Catholic religion, and so disgraceful to his enemies, that the King seemed to be ready to let his lordship go, and to restore him all his goods, when—God so disposing it and preserving His servant for great things—some men making a more careful search than

usual, found out that the mother of the Baron, who was herself under condemnation and in prison, but who retained all her fervour and devotion, had received a priest into her cell on the very feast of St. John the Baptist [June 24]. When the officers entered, they found a good Father who had just completed the holy Sacrifice, and was in the act of distributing the most holy Body of Christ to those who were assisting. Mrs. Vaux herself and two others had communicated. The priest turned back to the altar and quietly received the remaining hosts lest they should fall into sacrilegious hands. The first man who entered the room, seeing the altar well appointed and all of them kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, was astounded: and forgetting the fierceness with which, under similar circumstances, most people rush upon a priest, only uttered these words: 'Has not your ladyship suffered enough already for this sort of thing?' . . .

"So our good Father Cornforth was taken, a very holy man, whose life well deserves recording. He was carried off to the pseudo-Prelate of Canterbury, and as he could not conceal his priesthood on account of the circumstances in which he was taken, so neither would he, for his safety's sake, hide his religious state. So he was sent off to that prison [Newgate] from which they usually take their victims when they want an offering for the god of heresy. Canterbury then went to the King in all haste and fury, and putting fire to the cotton to raise a flame, so inflamed the King's mind against the Baron, that he seems to have diverted him from his inclination to set free to the very reverse."⁷

The news was duly sent to Fr. Thomas More at Rome on
6 July:

"Lord Vaux his mother this midsummer day had her chamber in the prison searched where was taken one of the Society, a priest, before he had communicated such as had prepared to receive that day, and for the sudden, himself (to avoid harm that might ensue) took the consecrated hosts. He is prisoner in Newgate. Mrs. Vaux also remaineth prisoner of the same. Lord Vaux and Sir Henry James in the King's Bench."⁸

It looks, from this letter, as though Elizabeth was actually in

Newgate prison, and not in the keeper's house, but another letter to More on 17 July, says :

"At Mrs. Vaux where she lieth prisoner the 29 [*sic*] of June was taken one Mr. Cornford a Jesuit who is committed to Newgate."⁹ This rather implies that Elizabeth was elsewhere.

It must have been very soon after the arrest of Fr. Cornford that Simon Houghton was removed from his office as gaoler. The event is first mentioned in a letter to Fr. More on 9 July.

"It is said . . . that the prisoners of Newgate were like to be starved ; a new keeper put over them and new grate made before the entry unto them and a guard set there that none could see them."¹⁰

The food situation is referred to in an earlier letter of 5 July :

"At Newgate they have almost all been poisoned with a salad which made them purge up and down. They are very hardly used : a new grate is made that none can come near them or to them. The B. of Canterbury hath been on his knees to the King for the death of more."¹¹ According to another report the salad was a deliberate attempt by the Archbishop to poison them because the King would not hang them.¹²

All this time Elizabeth's two chaplains had been languishing in the Gatehouse.¹³ An Italian account, dated 13 April, 1612, in the Vatican, states :

"The keeper of the prison where the two Jesuit priests are, who were taken in the mansion of Baron Vaux, begged the Archbishop of Canterbury, that as he had already examined them many times he would grant them permission to be freed from solitary confinement. The Archbishop took the request very ill and said that they were too comfortable and expressly instructed his servant that if he found them in a good room, albeit in solitary confinement he would be much offended, and ordered that they should be dumped in a worse place and kept more straitly."¹⁴

In July, however, whatever else they had to complain of it was not solitary confinement.

"I am furthermore told that the priests in custody here, being many in a small room did make a petition to the B. of Canterbury whose answer was that they should lie one upon another and that he that was undermost, when he was weary, might lie at the top."¹⁵

In August London became unbearably hot and there was nearly every year some form of contagion. Hence, Lord Vaux's sister presented a petition. This sister must be Catherine, as Mary was married and Joyce was a nun and abroad. Catherine was then about nineteen, and we gather from the last sentence of the following letter that she was an attractive young lady.

The Earl of Northampton writes on 3 August, apparently to the Earl of Rochester, though at times he addresses the King :

"At our breaking up at my Lord Chancellor's [Thomas Lord Ellesmere] this morning, Mistress Vaux a sister of the young Lord's offered a petition in the behalf both of her brother and her mother. The answer which the Lords gave was by letting her know on the behalf of both that her suit was above our capacity. For though the closeness of the rooms and the heat of the season and their annoyance was as is set down, yet they must remember that the judgment of a *praemunire* is transcendant to the power of any subject, in which rank we stand that by the grace of our Majesty are admitted of his council. She must therefore make her address to the most sacred ears of her merciful sovereign who only, but no servant of his, could give ease to their misery. She was desirous that we would move Your Majesty, but therein we forbore to comfort the contempt, but promised, by sending her petition, to leave the cause wholly to Your Majesty's gracious pleasure. This favour hath been often granted by compassion, that men condemned, by a difference from the case of treason, have been permitted to live in their keeper's house, either in the city or the country, so that he will undertake the charge. For *praemunire* binds to perpetual imprisonment.

"The one of them is in the keeper's house of Newgate, the other in the same degree, but whether in that place I know not. But all resteth in the will of his sacred Majesty. I dare undertake if the virgin had petitioned to King Henry VIII

whatsoever had become of the brother's fortune, the sister's face should not have been harbourless."¹⁶

On 12 August the Earl of Northampton wrote again to Rochester :

"The poor Lord Vaux and his mother are bound to pray for your Lordship in respect of your charitable and compassionate intercession. The matter shall be handled as the King directs, although for their part I believe that where the metropolitan [George Abbot] is the moderator I think they will expect no great mercy."¹⁷

On 17 August he writes again to Rochester :

"The Lords of the council, among which the Archbishop, according to the King's direction, was only latterly made acquainted with the King's reference, thought it not inconvenient that my Lord Vaux and his mother might be removed to some house near to London during this contagious time, so as the keeper would still continue them in his charge and be answerable even as now for their safe keeping and regular observances. This answer being sent back to your Lordship by the King's direction, it now receive admittance or repulse at his pleasure."¹⁸

But the hot, contagious season passed away and still Lord Vaux and his mother remained in prison. The persecution was gaining new momentum under Archbishop Abbot. Besides the two heretics he had caused to be burnt he was responsible for the deaths, on Whitsun Eve [May 30], of two more priests, one of whom, Richard Newport, was a native of Northamptonshire, having been born at Ashby St. Legers. Now in the autumn the rounding up of priests was proceeding on a scale perhaps greater than ever before.

"Continually they take priests," wrote a priest to Fr. More on 5 September. "There be now in Newgate some twenty-four and ten or a dozen in the Gatehouse, besides them that be in there already."¹⁹

At last in the October came the King's merciful permission for Lord Vaux, but not for his mother, to change one prison for another.

"The Lord Vaux" writes John Chamberlain on 22 October, "is pardoned the premunire and delivered out of the Fleet or King's Bench to the custody of the Dean of Westminster to see what may be done with him."²⁰

A further inquisition on Lord Vaux's goods was taken in January, 1613,²¹ but in April²² he was pardoned by the King to the extent of having his lands returned to him—lands that the Chancellor had tried in vain to seize—but he was still under restraint.

The only property that Lord Vaux had actually lost was the furniture of his chapel which had been seized when Harrowden was raided. Most of this had been brought to London and was presumably irrevocably lost, but some still remained at Titchmarsh. On 27 July, 1613, the Privy Council wrote to John Pickering who had now succeeded his father Gilbert :

"We send you here enclosed a note of such money, plate and other things as were taken by your father, deceased, from Harrowden House when he received directions from hence for the search thereof. And forasmuch as it is meet that those things be delivered to the Lord Vaux, who claimeth the same as his proper goods, we do therefore pray and require you to send up those things safely unto us, to be disposed of accordingly."²³

John Pickering obeyed in a somewhat desultory manner, for ten months later, on 14 May, 1614, the Privy Council report :

"Whereas the Lord Vaux made humble suit to their Lordships for restoration of divers parcels of plate remaining in the hands of John Pickering of Tichmarsh, esquire, and taken heretofore from Harrowden House by Sir Gilbert Pickering, knight, upon special order and direction from the Board, order was given to bring up the plate etc. Pickering today delivered four small parcels of plate, being the remainder of others already delivered and belonging all to the chapel, together with six borders wrought with needlework in gold and silver, with two other borders wrought with green silk and gold, a square cloth wrought with gold and pearl, and one white laced handkercher, which their Lordships commanded to

be kept in safety until further order should be given for the same."²⁴

No further order appears, and we shall never know whether Lord Vaux ever retrieved even these poor relics of his mother's gorgeous chapel. The more important altar requisites were, of course, destroyed. The Statute of 3 Jas I c.5 orders (section XXVI).

"If any altar, pix, beads, pictures, or such like popish relics, or any popish books shall be found in their custody, as in the opinion of the justices etc. shall be thought unmeet for such recusant to have, the same shall be presently defaced and burned, if it be meet to be burned. And if it be a crucifix, or other relic of any price, the same to be defaced at the general quarter sessions of the peace, in the county where the same shall be found, and the same so defaced to be restored to the owner again."

One wonders whether the gold crucifix, a foot high, with the pelican and the eagle, that Fr. Gerard has described with such enthusiasm, came under the sacrilegious hammer of some fanatical Puritan justice at Northampton, and whether the battered remains were ever returned to Lord Vaux or his mother.

CHAPTER IV

WASTE AND WITHER AWAY

I

PEDRO de Zuniga, Spanish Ambassador Extraordinary, having concluded his mission in England, set out for Spain in October, 1612. He obtained permission to take into exile with him seven priests out of the London prisons, including Percy and Hart, who had been captured in the raid on Harrowden Hall. Archbishop Abbot did his best to extract from them a guarantee that they would never return to England.¹ It is unlikely that any of them agreed to this. Indeed one of them, Joseph Haynes "told Canterbury that he had rather go to hanging than to banishment, for it was never his seeking."² With the party went also William Vaux. He had returned from Lisbon only in the previous March. He perhaps travelled as a servant to the Ambassador. The priests left the party as soon as they arrived in Flanders, and Percy and Hart were back in England by 9 January following.³ William continued with the Ambassador into Spain. Sir John Digby, our Ambassador at Madrid, reports on 27 January, 1613:

"Don Pedro brought along with him a younger brother of my Lord Vaux, giving out that he had brought a young English *Conde*, who merely for religion had forsaken his estate and country . . . He useth the young gentleman so ill, that he heartily wisheth himself again home. And he sheweth little respect unto our nation, for, giving him out to be an English *Conde*, he affordeth him not a place at his own table, but maketh him eat with his servants, with which and divers other things our English Catholics that reside here are much scandalized. One that was lately some nobleman of their court, going to see the English youths that are here in the Seminary, earnestly entreated him to accompany them, but he desired God to speed them well: as for himself, it was a nation with which he was already surfeited, which being

CHAPTER I
WATTS AND STEPHEN LEE

THESE TWO MEN, who were contemporaries, were the first to give a scientific basis to the theory of the steam engine. The first of them, James Watt, was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1736. He was a man of great genius, and his inventions were of great importance to the world. The second of them, Stephen Lee, was born in 1745. He was also a man of great genius, and his inventions were of great importance to the world. The two men were contemporaries, and their inventions were of great importance to the world. The first of them, James Watt, was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1736. He was a man of great genius, and his inventions were of great importance to the world. The second of them, Stephen Lee, was born in 1745. He was also a man of great genius, and his inventions were of great importance to the world.

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overheard by an Englishman that was there in the habit of a Spaniard, is generally divulged, and causeth much hatred among them."⁴

The next we hear of William is in July, 1613, when he was in serious trouble, but the following reference gives all that is known of this tragedy. John Sanford, one of the Ambassador's servants, writes from Madrid on 27 July :

"On St. James' day at night, my Lord Vaux's brother, who came over with Pedro de Zuniga, killed one Copland, an Englishman who had been a merchant at Lisbon, in the street. He came as a *retraylo* [fugitive] to my Lord's house, but for the odiousness of the fact, my Lord would only give *amparo* [sanctuary] till the evening, when he was conveyed to the Venetian ambassador."⁵

The Venetian archives may perhaps contain further details of this episode. All that can be learned from English sources is that William was home again in 1616.

Uncle Ambrose, resplendent with his knighthood, returned to England in 1612, and it will be no surprise to learn that he was almost at once imprisoned in the King's Bench, presumably for debt. But this time he was lucky, for it so happened that Sir William Wiseman, Fr. Gerard's old friend, and now brother-in-law to Eleanor and Anne, was also a prisoner, and he certainly was in for debt. Even so he seems to have been free with his money. Ambrose admits that he borrowed "a matter of twelve or thirteen pounds or thereabouts ; but he saith that his debt was the least of many, he also saith that Sir William did sometimes appoint meetings at dinner and suppers, where some of the prisoners would hang upon him, besides his invited friends," so that a dinner cost him "one way and another not so little as thirty or forty shillings."⁶

Ambrose being a borrower rather than a lender was the first to obtain his freedom, but he was now forty-two, and had still to settle the problem of how to live. He chose a not unusual way ; he married a widow of means. This was Elizabeth, widow of William Wyborne, of a Kentish recusant family. This marriage took place, according to Ambrose, about 4 April, 1612, but he is rather vague about it, and it was probably clandestine, as

in which he was engaged, and which was the subject of a
 letter to him from Mr. Johnson, dated 17th July 1791.

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Catholic marriages had to be. At the time, says Ambrose, she was "possessed of divers goods and chattels, and had great store of money in her hands, or in the hands of some of her friends." But some two days before the marriage, by deed bearing date 2 April, Elizabeth conveyed all her goods, household stuff, implements, chattels, moveable and immoveable, and everything else to Sir Richard Blunt and Dudley Norton, the executors of her husband's will, retaining only thirty pounds for herself. Not content with this, says Ambrose, they persuaded her after the marriage to go and live with Dudley Norton. In August Ambrose heard that she had gone to a play with Norton at the Globe in Southwark. He went accordingly to the theatre, and perceiving Elizabeth to be therein, Dudley Norton began to be much distempered, and with great violence and blasphemous oaths, with Joseph Mules his servant and others, all "armed arrayed and weaponed with rapiers, daggers, pistols, and other weapons, assaulted him and held him, Dudley Norton swearing: 'God's wounds, thither he brought her, and from thence he would carry her again away in despite of him.' "

Norton's version is rather different. He says that for his recreation, attended only by Mullis he went with Elizabeth and two friends to the Globe, where he never was above four or five times in his life, and sitting there together, Ambrose came and told Elizabeth that she must go away with him. Whereupon Norton, perceiving the great fear she was in, took pity on her, and advised him to forbear, desiring him with fair words that he would be contented to meet her and confer orderly and peaceably at another time. But Ambrose would hearken to no terms of peace, and in a very outrageous manner offered to draw his dagger. Norton, seeing it half out, laid one of his hands only upon Ambrose's wrist, for the preservation of his Majesty's peace, and in the mean time Elizabeth went away with her friends.

The inevitable Star Chamber case⁷ was heard in May, 1613, and in June, the Globe, immortalised by Shakespeare, was burnt to the ground.

The defendants first demanded the judgment of the court "whether the complainant be to be answered unto by the name of Sir Ambrose Vaux, knight, he being indeed (for anything they know) but an esquire and no knight." It was too much to

expect that Ambrose's knighthood, conferred by the Franciscans in Jerusalem, would be recognised by an English court of law, but it could scarcely have been less reputed that the English knighthood, which King James had so recklessly cheapened. Anyone with an income of £40 a year, who was willing to pay enough, could procure a knighthood. As early as 1603 Sir Thomas Tresham had written: "I cannot esteem less than some four hundred at the least in this shire [Northampton] is to appear upon this knighting process, whereof some landless, many base and dosser-headed clowns, and not one among forty worthy of that degree."⁸

This, however, did not affect the case. It was established that William Wyborn's debts far exceeded his assets, and that Elizabeth willingly agreed to pay what she could out of her small inheritance. Her marriage with Ambrose was not disputed, so that, after all his efforts, he found himself well and truly espoused to a penniless widow, whose only attraction had been her great store of money. Ambrose did not prove an ideal husband. He gave his wife the title of Lady Vaux, but nothing more. The King granted two-thirds of the lands of her uncle, Edward Wyborn a recusant, for her relief,⁹ and in 1624, when Edward died, she received a similar grant from the lands of his son Benjamin. She is then described as a "poor miserable woman," and "a poor desolate woman, who without this relief is like to be brought to extreme misery."¹⁰

The following episode may belong to 1612 when he was prisoner in the King's Bench with Sir William Wiseman, but it may equally well belong to almost any period in the life of this restless and impecunious Don Quixote. It is indeed fortunate that the incident was witnessed by Henry Sherley, a little known dramatist who might have reached greater fame had it not been for his untimely death—he was killed by a drunken peer—in 1627. His poem will serve as a fitting *envoi* to poor Uncle Ambrose.

THE BATTAILE

The Combattantes

S^r Ambrose Vaux, knight, and Glascott the
Bayley of Southwarke
thee Rule of the Kinges Bench

Noe Amorous style affecte my pen :
 For why? I wright of fighting men.
 The bloody storye of a fight
 Betwixt A Bayliffe and a Knight.
 Lett him that therfore wrighte the storye
 of Warwicke Guy or Bevis glory,
 S^r Tristrams hurte and Lanclottes woundes,
 Or Otters hunted wth great hounds,
 Confess the storye doth excele
 with best of Any I Can tell,
 who was a wittnes of the fraye
 which thus my Muse 'ginns to displaye.

S^r Ambrose strooke the first great blowe
 which did the Bayliffe ouerthrowe,
 That hee lay tumbling In the durte
 From which hee tooke his greatest hurte,
 Saue that the Knight A way did teare
 A handfull of the verlettes hayre.
 Thee Knight for teen, the Knaue for feare
 Wth Roaring did their Chopses teare,
 Whilst all the weomen loud did Cry
 S^r Ambrose Lett the villayn dye.
 The Bayliffe then Cried out for helpe :
 Wth that a nother marshalls whelpe
 Did from his foes devouring paws,
 All In the dirte, his fellow drawes.

The Knight not with all this Content
 A scornfull Kicke att Glascotte sent ;
 But then the dirte In w^{ch} he rolde,
 I grieue att what must now be tould,
 Soe Slipperye was, in all our sight
 Uppon his backe fell doune the Knight,
 And being much Inragd theratt,
 Uppon his feet In rage hee gatt
 And forth he sturdy Corpes hee launches
 Wth Quiuering thighes and Quaging paunches.

About the Dumpe the Bayliffe rann,
 And now the worst of all begane.
 The Knight noe Longer could persue,
 Too well his Boundes the Bayliffe knewe :

But had hee In his clutches come
 Methinkes I see what Marterdome
 The women and the Knight had made
 on hym that now noe Longer stayd,
 But home returnd, not shamd to bee
 Sore Kickt by true Nobillite.¹¹

Ambrose's burial is recorded in the Parish Register of St. Mary-le-Strand :

"25 April 1626 Ambrose Vaux Knight buried."

There were many plague victims buried at this time, but no indication that Ambrose was one. There was no church of St. Mary-le-Strand at this date, as Protector Somerset had pulled it down in the reign of Edward VI, and used the materials for building Somerset House. Services were held at the Savoy, but a separate register was kept for St. Mary's, and the burials took place in Lincolns Inn Fields, where perhaps the bones of Ambrose still lie. Thus passed away the last of the four sons of William Lord Vaux, aged fifty-six.

II

Lord Vaux remained in the custody of the Dean of Westminster from October, 1612, till July, 1613. He was then transferred to Alderman Prescott, Sheriff of London,¹² but if he went at all it was only for a few days, for on 6 August the Privy Council directed Thomas Crewe to receive him in his house at Steane, near Brackley, till the beginning of the next term. He was to allow him to visit local gentry "well affected in religion," and to go to Harrowden for a night or two if his business required it. At the beginning of term Crewe was to bring him up to London "to be disposed of as shall be expedient."¹³

In October, Vaux was evidently restored to the custody of the Dean, for on 14 January, 1614, he was allowed to go from there to Cheam for fourteen days "in respect to the indisposition of his body, bred (as he allegeth) by continual keeping of the house, and the closeness of the air."¹⁴ He was allowed to reside at Harrowden from November, 1614, till 1 April, 1615, signing bonds of £500 to return to the Dean on that date.¹⁵ It is not

known when he was finally released from this irksome and useless restraint.

Elizabeth Vaux was not released with her son, but still lay in Newgate or close by. Under the new keeper, Roger Price, and with the enthusiastic direction of the Archbishop, things went from bad to worse. Early in October, 1612, the priests there, some twenty-four in all,¹⁶ refused to give their word to be true prisoners, and announced their intention of escaping if they could. On 9 October, seven of them broke out and got clean away. One was Fr. Cornford who had been caught in the act of saying Mass for Elizabeth in Newgate, and another was Henry Maylard who had been condemned with her.¹⁷ A third was a priest named Henry Cooper, and in a letter of 10 November, he recounts the provocation that had driven them to break prison.

“I am sure you have heard of the inhuman dealing of our keeper with us, putting us all into justice hall without commodity of lodging ; forcing divers of us to sit up night by night, and yet expecting money for beds, debarring all access of friends, suffering the pursuivants to seize on such as came unto our grate, yea vexing even Protestants themselves that come unto us ; neither can we have any remedy against him ; such is the malice of the B[ishop] who maintaineth all injuries done unto us, and our keepers’ pride in their excess, as overruled with passion.”¹⁸

As a result of this escape, the remaining prisoners were “cast into the dungeon with fetters and gyves.”¹⁹ Among them was a bluff, outspoken priest named John Almond, who was reported by the keeper’s wife to have affirmed that a regicide could be absolved by a priest if he were truly repentant.²⁰ For this crime John Almond was condemned to death. When on 5 December he stood on the scaffold at Tyburn, he denounced the ill treatment meted out to the prisoners in Newgate :

“He also flung away some three or four pounds in silver amongst the poor that crowded about the gallows, saying, ‘I have not much to bestow or give, for the keeper of Newgate hath been somewhat hard unto me and others that way, whom God forgive, for I do ; for I having been prisoner there since

March we have been ill-treated continually, but now at last without charity; for we were all put down into the hole or dungeon, or place of little ease, whence was removed since we came thither two or three cart-loads of filth and dirt. We were kept twenty-four hours without bread or meat or drink, loaded with irons, lodging on the damp ground, and so continued for ten days or thereabouts.' Here Mr. Sheriff told him that the keeper had done nothing but by orders, and was commanded to do what he had done. 'I had thought,' said Mr. Almond, 'it had been done of his own head; but since it was done by power, I will neither resist it nor speak further of it.'"²¹

The Archbishop was personally responsible for this execution; "having obtained the same of the King, promising him that it would be very profitable to their cause, for that the priest was both timorous and unlearned; which when the king heard to be otherwise he raged exceedingly, and said he would execute no more."²²

To some extent the King was as good as his word, for there was not another execution for religion in England till March, 1616, a period of three and a quarter years. This was the longest respite from the death sentence that the Catholics had known since the execution of the first seminary priest in 1577.

In January, 1613, Elizabeth's name appears in a list of prisoners in Newgate, together with thirteen priests and some laymen,²³ and there is nothing to suggest that she was being treated any differently from the others. When the summer came round again, with its recrudescence of plague, a warrant was issued, dated 3 July, "for the enlargement out of prison of Elizabeth Vaux widow, for eight months for recovery of her health, putting in security for yielding of her body again to prison at the termination of the said time."²⁴ There is no further reference to any restraint on her liberty till 1 March, 1618, when her brother, Sir Christopher Roper and Sir Thomas Brudenell entered into bonds of £1,000 each, for her personal appearance before the Privy Council within twenty days next after warning and notice given.²⁵ But by this time Elizabeth had left Harrowden, never to return. Perhaps its desolated chapel was filled with memories too sad to be endured; perhaps it was merely a question of

economy. Whatever the reason, in 1616 Elizabeth and Edward moved to Boughton, and Harrowden was left empty and deserted.

Boughton, four miles from Northampton, must be distinguished from Boughton House near Kettering, which has already appeared in this book. It came into the Vaux family on the marriage of Nicholas Lord Vaux with Anne Green in 1509. The ancient house was demolished about a hundred years ago, and the new one has no associations with the family. The church which Lord Vaux and his mother refused to attend was probably out of repair when they moved there. It was a good mile from the village, and the people had long worshipped in a little chapel that had been built as a chantry chapel by the Green family, and was still the property of Lord Vaux. Only the tower now remains: the rest was rebuilt a hundred years ago and serves as the parish church. The original parish church was thus what is now called "redundant," and was treated accordingly. In 1637 both church and chancel were "very undecent with broad flags in the floor, and two places broke right through the walls about the communion table, where it is supposed the conies in Sir Christopher Hatton's cony ground adjoining do come in in the winter time." "There was a great heap of stones in the chancel, the windows were "for the most stopped up," and the porch was in great decay.²⁶ Since then the tower has fallen, the roof has disappeared, and the walls moulder away, amid weeds waist high, on the bleak and lonely hillside.

The removal of the household from Harrowden to Boughton may be traced in the recusant roll for 1616.²⁷ Lord Vaux does not appear, but Elizabeth is there, and her son William and her footman, William Sturley, who was later to be imprisoned for his faith in Newgate. In 1618, there is a Mary Huddleston, and a Margaret Jenison, (probably a niece of Fr. Gerard) who later became a nun.

The house was not so well adapted for priest-hiding as was Harrowden Hall. For one thing there was a right of way that actually passed through the courtyard, until Lord Vaux managed to have it diverted in 1633.²⁸ But in 1616 the persecution had settled down to a constant attack on the recusant's purse, and as long as he paid the iniquitous fines he was left more or less in peace. There was a lull in the execution of Catholics. Between 1616 and 1628 there was only one priest put to death, and Tyburn

was not to see another martyrdom till 1641. The dwindling Catholic gentry were no longer feared, but were treated with contempt. They were debarred from all public offices, and lived a life of obscurity and retirement. The more adventurous sought service in foreign lands and in foreign armies ; the others entrenched themselves in their embarrassed estates, farmed their lands, and practised their religion in secret. It was a quiet life, and there is very little for the historian to record.

In 1619 there is a reminder of old friendships. At the consecration of the new church of the English Benedictine nuns in Brussels, Fr. Thomas Strange gave a pair of silver candlesticks and a set of green vestments, Fr. Roger Lee a set of crimson vestments, Fr. Thompson (John Gerard) two silver reliquaries, and at his suggestion "my Lady Anne Winter gave a silver image of St. Anne, my Lady Lovell one of St. Scholastica, Mrs. Vaux, her sister, one of our holy father St. Benedict ; one of St. Maurus by my Lady Digby."²⁹ This last was the widow of the conspirator, Sir Everard, whose sister had entered this community.

There is another reference to Elizabeth in 1621, from a very different source. John Gee, author of *The Foot out of the Snare*, which contains a very full and oft-quoted list of priests in England, wrote a sequel called *New Shreds of the Old Snare*, published in 1624. The snare in both cases is, of course, the Church of Rome, and this latter book contains what must surely be the prototype of all those stories of sleek and subtle Jesuits, weaving their webs round innocent and incredibly stupid young heiresses. This story, unlike its successors, has the merit of being concerned with real persons, but that is no guarantee of its veracity.

Three years ago, says Gee, Mary Boucher of London, widow and gentlewoman, was taken into service with Lady A, a papist, who promised not to pervert her.

"Yet there repairing often to the Lady's house Mr. Fisher, Mr. Wainman and Mr. Ireland, Jesuits," they soon concocted a devilish plan to make Mary a papist, and, what was worse, a nun. Mr. Fisher is Fr. John Percy, who had returned from banishment in 1613. Their apologetics succeeded only in giving Mary a headache, but there were other arrows in their quiver.

"These things troubling and distempering the young woman's

mind, she found herself scarce well, and then went and laid her down upon her bed, where after she had rested herself a while, there comes into the chamber one Mistress Vaux, a great recusant, and asked her how she did, and then came to her and did with somewhat stroke or rub her forehead. After which time Mary Boucher felt herself very ill at ease and distempered in her head. And about an half-hour after Mistress Vaux was departed from her, she heard her chamber door open, and with that a great light flashed into the room two or three times, which she thought somebody did by way of jest or merriment, to make her afraid."

Then there materialized an apparition of a figure all in white which Mary recognized as her godmother. And where should she spring from, but all the way from Purgatory, to tell her that there was no hope for Protestants. Having delivered her message the ghost departed.

"Shortly after . . . there comes in . . . Mistress Vaux and asked her how she fared." Mary told her all about her godmother.

"‘Oh then’ quoth Mistress Vaux, ‘It is time for thee to become a good Catholic’." Exit Mistress Vaux.

Re-enter Ghost.

"‘God-daughter, you are ordained to be a nun . . . See Mr. Ireland’."

This went on and on for several pages. There were twelve ghostly visits in all, and, suspiciously enough, a visit from Mistress Vaux in between each. Then Mary's mother arrived, and took her home, and all attempts to "nunnify" her were triumphantly resisted.

It had long been the custom for Catholics, disabled by the penal laws from serving in the English army, to seek military adventure abroad, usually under the Spanish. It was in this way that Guy Fawkes acquired the skill in mining operations that he later applied to the Houses of Parliament: it was in this way too that Sir Ambrose Vaux gained that military bearing that enabled him, more or less, to sustain the dignity of a knight.

In 1621 the war between Catholic Spain and the Protestant United Provinces of Holland flared up again. It was a war of

religion and English opinion was of course largely the result of religious preconceptions. But the policy of King James fluctuated between Spain and her enemies. Volunteer regiments were raised and served on the Protestant side under the Earls of Oxford, Southampton and Essex and Lord Willoughby. The Catholics for their part gave their support to the Spaniards. Two regiments, a Scotch and an English, were raised, without any opposition from the English Government, and Lord Vaux became colonel of the English Regiment. Under him were captains from many well-known Catholic families. Sir Edward Parham, who had married Sir Thomas Tresham's daughter, Bridget, was his sergeant-major: there were also Sir Valentine Brown, Sir James Creighton, Roger Tirwhitt, John Timperly, Thomas Bedingfield, Henry Gage, Robert Huddleston and Sir Edward Easton,³⁰ all names of note among the recusants.

On 8 April, 1622, Lord Vaux was issued with his licence "to pass the seas as colonel of the voluntary soldiers licenced by his Majesty to go over to serve the King of Spain, and to take with him servants and trunks of apparel and other provisions."³¹

Warrant for the captains to embark was granted on 10 April.³² The troops numbered 8,000 in all, half of them forming the Scotch regiment under the Earl of Argyle. Some of them set sail in advance of their colonel, for on 29 April the Venetian Ambassador in London reports to his government:

A ship with English soldiers for Brussels went to land them not at the port of Calais, but at some place near. The governor would not allow it, but sent them back and wrote to the Ambassador Triliers that if such a thing happened again he could not help hanging the men. When the King heard this he expressed his entire satisfaction, as when Lord Vaux, one of the colonels, took leave, the King said a great deal to his showing that the business was little to his liking."³³

Vaux was back again in August for there is a letter of warrant to the Lord Treasurer "to give order to the officers of the ports to suffer the Lord Vaux to transport out of this realm for his own use a certain quantity of plate to the value of £100."³⁴

By August, Vaux's regiment was entrenched round the famous fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom some twenty miles to the north of Antwerp. Ever since the Duke of Parma had been expelled

from it in 1577, with the help of English arms, it had been held by the Dutch Protestants. It had been unsuccessfully besieged in 1581 and 1588, and yet again in 1605 when it had stood firm in spite of the presence among the besiegers of Guy Fawkes and Ambrose Vaux. Now the Catholic volunteers were making another effort to subdue it, much to the disgust of the English Protestant volunteers who formed part of the defenders. Sir Dudley Carleton wrote from The Hague on 27 August :

"They [the Protestant volunteers] find by intercepted letters how other principal persons of his Majesty's council stand affected by having a hand in the preferring the chief officers of the field of the regiments of our nation to the other side : who are now (as well those sent over by my Lord Vaux as the others sent for by my Lord of Argyle) in the enemy's camp before Bergen. Little to their honour (as these men say) to seek to bring a Spinola within those walls from before which their fathers drave a Parma. But these being placed against the English and Scottish works they fight in those trenches like the children of Cadmus. God send the quarrel pass no further."³⁵

Again the siege was unsuccessful. William Trumbull writes to Mr. Secretary Calvert on 26 January, 1623 :

"The siege of Bergen hath reduced all the parts of the Campeign and villages thereabouts to extreme great desolation and misery. I hear it is intended to reform or raise twenty companies that are the weakest, in the English and Scottish regiments. That commanded by the Earl of Argyle is weak and esteemed not to exceed the number of 600 men. That of the Lord Vaux is reported to be about fourteen or fifteen hundred. Both of them complain of slack payments."³⁶

He reports again on 23 February :

"At this instant they are here refounding twelve companies of our two British regiments, five of the Earl of Argyle's and seven of that which is commanded by the Lord Vaux. In that are refounded Sir Valentine Brown, Captain Timperley, Captain Roger Markham (deceased), Captain Terwitt and Captain Hamilton. In this, Sir Robert Huddleston, Captain Thomas Blount (dead), Captain Whitmore, Captain Allen,

Captain Herbert, Captain Lewckner and one other. And so both the said regiments are reduced to fifteen companies apiece. Those that stand expect means, by new supplies, to repair the decays of other companies.”³⁷

This Captain Robert Huddleston was son of Father Gerard’s friend Henry, who brought the news of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot to Harrowden. There is a petition (in Spanish) to the Infanta on his behalf signed by Lord Vaux and dated 20 March, 1623.³⁸

On 28 March Trumbull wrote more pessimistically still :

“Our English and Scottish regiments are weak and not the least contented (as they say), and I am sure some of the reformed Captains (whatsoever the rest be) are weary of their bargain. Those are but *boutades*, and Ignatius de Loyola’s disciples that have the predominant power among them will easily, by their artifice quench that *feu de paille*. The Earl of Argyle hath sent into Scotland for supplies, and shall have them. But (I think) they must be “beanyed” and brought over at his own charges, and when they are landed in Flanders he shall reimburse his money after the rate of £20 sterling ahead.”³⁹

Lord Vaux was also in need of reinforcements and came over to England. There is another permit dated 5 June, 1624, for him to “depart the kingdom with such officers and soldiers as shall be willing, under his conduct, to serve the King of Spain and to continue there till the King’s pleasure signified to the contrary ; with licence to him to travel to or from England on his private affairs.”⁴⁰

But by this time King James’ policy was veering round and he was negotiating a treaty of marriage for his son, afterwards Charles I, with the French King’s daughter. After much animated debate, a royal proclamation had been issued on 24 March, announcing the termination of the treaties with Spain. Sir Francis Nethersole informs Dudley Carleton on 7 June :

“It is too certain that during those treaties with France his Majesty will continue to carry himself doubtfully towards Spain, as he hath now given a Commission to my Lord Vaux to re-enforce his regiment and levy more men for the King of

Spain before he would give order for the signing of the treaty with the States [of Holland] which was done on Saturday last [5 June], but the colonels were not named yesterday nor this day as was expected: tomorrow it is hoped they will be."⁴¹

The same information was sent to the Doge and Senate by the Venetian Ambassador on 21 June:

"Lord Vaux, a Catholic, has obtained a renewal of his old patent, to fill up the company with which he is now serving the Infanta of Brussels. The prince [Charles] is making great efforts to get it revoked, and some hope he may succeed, but in any case the grant will probably prove useless from the lack of anyone to go, or at least, in the King's words, because only Catholics will go, and so he claims it will serve to purge the kingdom of such."⁴²

Lord Vaux was quite aware of the change of policy and on 19 June obtained a pass for "Alexander Wye and three others of the Lord Vaux his servants, to pass over the seas to fetch from thence his horses, goods and other moveables hither."⁴³

By 25 June it was evident that Prince Charles had prevailed with his father. Sir Francis Nethersole informed Carleton:

"My Lord Vaux his levies were long since crossed by the Prince"⁴⁴

and the Venetian Ambassador, who shows so much interest in the negotiations, reports on 28 June:

"Lord Vaux will not fill up his company for Flanders, as the recent grant to him has been revoked, to his great chagrin and the disgust of the Spaniards."⁴⁵

By July it was known in Brussels that Vaux had decided to resign his commission, and Trumbull writes on 12 July:

"Upon notice brought hither of my Lord Vaux his resolution to stay in England and not to return any more to the command of his English Regiment serving in these parts, the Infanta at the mediation of the Marques de la Inoiosa and Dom Carlos Collonna, together with the assistance of M. Van Male, hath given the command of that Regiment to Sir Edward Parham, and yesterday his *A Mandat* was signed by the drawing up

and despatch of his Patent. The question is now who shall succeed Sir Edward Parham in his late place of Sergeant Major, which preferment is contested by Sir William Tresham and one Captain Revesby. That gentleman [Tresham] being dignified with the honour of a knighthood by his Majesty, and pleading for his service done under the Lord Arundel of Wardour almost twenty years ago as a voluntary and advantager with fifteen crowns a month; this [Revesby] having favour in the court (though little beloved in the regiment) . . . and allied to Sir Griffin Markham (the oracle of our countrymen in these parts) by marrying his niece, daughter to Sir John Skinner, his sister's husband."⁴⁶

Thus ended Lord Vaux's undistinguished two years of military service, but the family was still represented, for in a list dated 25 December, 1625, of "the names of the English and Scottish Gentlemen which serve the King of Spain in the Low Countries under the Infanta" occurs, immediately under Sir Edward Parham Colonel, "Captain Vaux." This was the youngest brother Henry. From this same list we learn that Captain Revesby became Sergeant Major, but Sir William Tresham (who had deserted his wife) is still there. Other names that proclaim their Catholicism are Brudenell, Bentley, Berington Sanders, Cansfield and Lovell.⁴⁷

From a letter sent by Fr. Thomas Fitzherbert, Rector of the English College in Rome, to Fr. Norton S.J., Rector of the Jesuit College at St. Omers, we get a glimpse of a son of Richard Richardson, butler at Harrowden. This was Edward Richardson who entered the English College in Rome in July, 1617, aged 16, proceeded to minor orders in May, 1618, and then had a serious nervous breakdown, or worse, and so never went on to ordination.⁴⁸ In June, 1624, he was sent to Belgium with another "distracted youth" and the long letter sent after him was intercepted by English spies. The letter is dated 22 June, 1624.

"One of the two distracted youths, to wit, Edward Richardson, was bred up in England, and sent to St. Omers, as I have understood, by my Lord Vaux or by his mother, and therefore I think it were most convenient and the youth also desired it, that he be presented to my Lord Vaux, if he be

returned from England into these parts, who by all likelihood will help to provide for him, if Fr. Tomson [John Gerard] have not some order for his sending into England, as perhaps he may have, seeing he hath written to me twice that he is desired in England to teach a gentleman's children, whereto no doubt he will be very sufficient, if God send him his health, whereof there may be very good hope when he shall come into a colder climate and to his own natural air. The youth hath been always of great virtue and sufficiency for learning in all his courses of logic and philosophy, being withal one of the best humanicians in the college, as well for Greek as Latin, and withal very skilful in music both for the song and viol; so as truly it is great pity that he could not proceed with his studies to be an ecclesiastical man as he desired, having had withal for some years a very constant vocation to the Society, and therefore I must the rather request you to do for him what you can."⁴⁹

Had it not been for the interception of this letter we should know nothing of this benefaction of Lord Vaux or his mother.

The swing of English policy from Spain to France was complete by June, 1624, when the Spanish Ambassador, the Marques of Inoiosa, was sent home in disgrace. The position of the Catholics was again delicate. During the temporary lull in persecution earlier in the year Catholic Peers had entered Parliament, having apparently at last taken the disputed oath. Lord Vaux was first present on 19 February.⁵⁰ The Venetian Ambassador in London reports on 15 March:

"The six Catholic peers have re-entered parliament, as they have changed their minds and taken the oath which they previously refused. It is not known whether the change was due to their consciences or from the absolution of their confessors. There is much thunder against the Catholics and lightning is feared. They are making enquiries as to how many there may be in the kingdom, and are hunting for some suspected of sedition, whom they have not yet found."⁵¹

Their stay in Parliament lasted less than a year. By March, 1625, King James was approaching his end, and Prince Charles was more prominent in the affairs of state and more hostile to

Catholics. The Venetian Ambassador in the Netherlands writes on 18 March, 1625 :

"The partisans of the Palatine here have also heard of the new oath imposed upon the members of the upper house by the prince, after having taken it himself, and that Lords Windsor, Morley, Vaux and Montague withdrew from the parliament to avoid taking it, as all four are Catholics and lean to the Spaniards, from what they say."⁵²

Ten days later, on 27 March, King James died, and his son was proclaimed King as Charles I.

CHAPTER V.

VAUX V. KNIGHTLEY

I

THE advent of King Charles I brought no great change in policy or in the treatment of papists. The recusant fines had by now become as much a normal source of revenue as the tobacco tax today. King James had himself declared that he received annually "six and thirty thousand pounds of good rent in England and Ireland"¹ from the recusants, and it was not to be expected that his son, faced with the huge debts left by his extravagant father, would dispense with such easy money, even had he so wished.

As Lord Vaux had consistently evaded the payment of these fines two-thirds of his property was forfeited. It is not clear who enjoyed this forfeiture in the preceding years, but within a month of the new King's accession, on 22 April, 1625, a new grant was made.

"Whereas in 3 Jas. I [1605-6] Edward Vaux Lord Harrowden was indicted and convicted of recusancy . . . and whereas in the terms of Easter and Michaelmas next after the conviction he did make default of payment . . . and hath since also made default of payment of all sums of money, as after the rate of £20 for every month, have arisen and grown due . . . he being unable though willing . . . to make satisfaction to his creditors . . . besought our Father [the King] . . . to grant . . . to Sir Lewis Tresham and Sir Thomas Brudenell, knights, the benefit of the forfeitures etc."²

These two gentlemen, though Catholics, were apparently not convicted recusants, and as they were personal friends and honest men, they would no doubt pay back to Lord Vaux whatever profits remained after they had satisfied his creditors. Indeed there is still extant at Dene³ a receipt, dated 13 July, 1625, for £800 paid by Sir Thomas Brudenell on behalf of Edward

Lord Vaux, to Henry Davis and George Vavasour, servants of Lord Vaux.

But the grievous fines were only a part of the vexatious treatment under which the recusants groaned. They were still forbidden to travel more than five miles without a licence, and their houses were subject to humiliating searches. In some ways things were worse now than ever before, for the King and Council affected to be more worried than usual, after the period of comparative freedom from molestation that the Catholics had enjoyed during the treaty negotiations.

King James had expressed the pious hope that allowing the papists to serve under the Spanish banner in Flanders, would "serve to purge the kingdom of such." But he had not appreciated the drawbacks to the scheme. The excuse of serving abroad enabled all sorts of people to travel backward and forward with far less risk than of old. Priests could enter the Kingdom disguised as soldiers, and all and sundry could import relics and *Agnus Deis* and other contraband. And who knew what mischief they were meditating in the safety of a Catholic country, under the sinister influence of the Jesuits?

Only a few months after Lord Vaux first took his regiment across the channel, a suspicious character was arrested at Dover, on 5 July, 1623.

"Thomas Cuttler of the age of 42 years, professeth himself to be a soldier and a musician, and embarked about fourteen days before Michaelmas last, here at Dover, having a pass from the Spanish Ambassador, and since that time hath served as a gentleman of the Company under Captain Vivian Mollineux, under the command of the Lord Vaux. And hath licence together with Robert Richardson, another gentleman of the same company, under the hand of the said Captain to repair into England for despatch of business for the space of six weeks . . .

"Being examined where he had the books, pictures, and other relics found about him, he saith they are his own and given unto him by sundry persons and at divers places where he travelled, and that they are for his own use, or to dispose to his friends. And that the letters found about him were delivered to him at Dermond in Brabant and other parts in

his travel by persons to him unknown. And being tendered the oath of allegiance he refused to take it.”⁴

On 6 December of the same year, Chamberlain writes to Sir Dudley Carleton of an even more disquieting symptom. It is a good example how not to run a secret society.

“There is a crew or knot of such kind of people [recusants] discovered, who, under colour of good fellowship have made an association and taken certain oaths and orders devised among themselves, specially to be true and faithful to the society and to conceal one another’s secrets, but mixed with a number of other ridiculous toys to disguise the matter, as having a Prince whom they call Ottoman, wearing of blue or yellow ribbons in their hats or elsewhere, having certain nicknames (as Titere and such like) for their several fraternities, with many other odd conceits, the bottom whereof is not yet discovered, though divers of them have been examined and some committed (as one of the Windsors and a few others). Most of them are young gentlemen who use to flock to taverns thirty or forty in a company. This combination began first in the Low Countries in the Lord Vaux his regiment, and hath since spread itself here to the number of eight score already known. What mischief may lurk under this mask God knows, but sure they were very confident and presumed much of themselves to carry it so openly.”⁵

But the main anxiety to the new King and his ministers was the supposed storing of firearms. Soldiers equipped in Flanders might be bringing these lethal weapons into England, and putting them by for future reference. Although the searches discovered no arms, other than fowling-pieces, the government took the danger very seriously.

The first instruction on the subject was dated (we gather from the following letter) 2 October, 1625, when Lord Vaux had been demobilized about eighteen months. The letter is dated 3 November, 1625.

“We whose names are hereunder written, deputy Lieutenants for the county of Northampton, the 26th of October last past received the request of Your Lordship’s letter to the right Honourable the Earl of Exeter, Lord Lieutenant of the said

county, bearing date at Salisbury, the second of the said month, with a letter from his Lordship to us directed, concerning the search of Romish recusants' houses for martial munitions, arms and weapons, and the putting of the said arms as should be so found (over and above the necessary guards of these several houses) in safe custody, for prevention of the doubt and danger specified in your Lordships' letter.

"Whereupon we, taking with us the undersheriff of the said county, on Monday being the last of the said month, repaired unto the dwelling-house of Mrs. Elizabeth Vaux of Boughton in the said county, a convicted and noted Romish recusant mother of the Lord Vaux. And there, finding the said Lord Vaux we imparted unto him and his mother the occasion of our coming in all fair and fitting manner, and especially to the Lord Vaux who read and perused your Lordship's letter. And we thereupon proceeded unto the search of the said house for arms and munitions, and finding none in the mansion-house nor in the vaults of the same, Mr. Richard Knightley and Mr. Elmes two of the deputy Lieutenants, with the undersheriff proceeded to the search of the out-houses and chambers without the gates of the same house, who coming to the chamber of Mr. William Vaux, a Romish recusant, brother to the said Lord Vaux, he the said William Vaux accompanied them.

"And after his chamber was searched and nothing found therein, the said Mr. Knightley and Mr. Elmes, with the undersheriff returned back to the search of a farm thereby, Mr. Vaux still accompanying them. The sheriff he proceeded to the search thereof and left the said Mr. Knightley, Mr. Elmes, and Mr. Vaux standing without discoursing, and in their discourse Mr. Vaux breaks out with these outrageous speeches, viz. that they could not be worse dealt withal unless they should cut their throats, wishing with an oath that it were come to that pass.

"Whereupon Mr. Knightley, being likewise a Justice of peace for the said county, admonished him in fair and friendly terms to forbear swearing, letting him understand the penalty of the statute in that behalf made, but he slighted him with rude and uncivil speeches, the rather in contempt redoubling his oaths.

"And as Mr. Knightley returned unto the house, he acquainted Mrs. Vaux and the lord Vaux, his brother, with the several oaths and uncivil misdemeanours of William Vaux, desiring that they would satisfy the penalty of the statute for him, in case he would not do the same himself. But they refusing, Mr. Knightley sent for the constables of the said command, charging them to distrain upon any of the goods of the said William Vaux according to the statute.

"After this was done we all repaired into the hall of the house, where Lord Vaux turned back upon Mr. Knightley, pushing him disgracefully by the shoulder out of the hall, telling him that now he had done the King's business he might be gone. Whereupon Mr. Knightley replied that they had not yet done searching and that he would go when he saw his time. Upon which the Lord Vaux, with his fist very violently struck Mr. Knightley with many several blows. In which bustling Chris. Hambleton a servant of Mr. Knightley's endeavouring to get Lord Vaux and his master, not suspecting anything, was by the Lord Vaux, with a cudgel taken from some standerby there present, stroken down to the ground, the blood running about his ears.

"Upon which misdemeanour we, with our company, were forced, for fear of a further danger, to depart, and thought it our duty to certify your Lordships hereof, not doubting but that your Lordships will be tender and sensible of an affront and violence offered in this kind, and upon this occasion, to us who came thither upon his Majesty's special service, and demeaned ourselves there as we have certified your Lordships and so much rather in regard of the example, the fact being on the instant far and near voiced. And as we conceive that if it be not called to an account (which we doubt not of) may give a dangerous encouragement to such as we find are too daring and insolent already. All which, with ourselves, we humbly submit to your Lordships' wisdom and considerations, being ready to affirm these and all other proceedings in this business when it shall please your Lordships to command us

And so humbly rest

[In Spencer's hand]
William Spencer
Hatton Fermor

Your Lordships to command
Thomas Lane
Thomas Elmes."6

The news was certainly "far and near voiced." Edward Lord Conway, Principal Secretary, sent to the Duke of Buckingham an account almost as long as the above. It gives details and even *ipsissima verba* which Conway must have got from the parties.

"In conclusion a brother of the Lord Vaux (amongst other intemperate and unadvised terms) said that they gave the recusants the worst usage they could, except they should cut their throats, and with divers oaths wished it were come to that day. Mr. Knightley replied to him, there were divers statutes against the recusants which they were not troubled withal, which the other denying with great oaths, Mr. Knightley alleged the statute of the £20 monthly for recusants. And further told him there was a late statute against swearing, which put a penalty of twelve pence upon every oath, and told him he must exact that from him: to which Mr. Vaux gave an answer with ill and scornful words. And Mr. Knightley addressed himself to Mrs. Vaux and the Lord Vaux, to make satisfaction for Mr. Vaux's oaths. They refused it, and Mr. Knightley charged a constable to distrain so much of Mr. Vaux's goods as would satisfy three shillings, and give that to the poor, according to the statute.

"The Lord Vaux upon this took Mr. Knightley aside, and told him if he found him in another place he would call him to a reckoning for this. To which Mr. Knightley replied:

"'You know where I dwell, and when you have a mind to call me to account you shall receive an answer from me, full to your demand.'

"Sir William Spencer and my Lord Vaux went into the hall; Mr. Knightley and the rest followed. My Lord Vaux turned towards Mr. Knightley, and putting his hand on his shoulder pushed him and said:

"'Now you have done your office you may be gone.'

"Mr. Knightley, turning again to him, told him he had not done; he might search more; and when he had done his office he would more willingly be gone than he would have him.

"The Lord Vaux gave him a good blow on the face, and they scuffling together were parted. But the Lord Vaux

taking a cudgel out of another's hand struck Mr. Knightley's man, broke his head, and knocked him down. And so the rest of the deputy-lieutenants, fearing further inconveniency, withdrew themselves."⁷

The Earl of Carlisle also wrote an account to the Duke of Buckingham, from which it appears that Mr. Knightley was not as passive as his friends suggest :

"There fell out a brabble at the Lord Vaux his house in Northamptonshire, wherein there were some blows exchanged between the said Lord and Mr. Knightley."⁸

Naturally, in the mouths of less well informed people the story became embroidered. Joseph Mead, for example writes :

"There was lately a search in Northamptonshire in papists' houses for arms. Mr. Knightley with some other and a constable came to my Lord Vaux's house and would have every trunk and box opened : one my Lord was very loth should be, and fell to expostulation, and therein swore two oaths, for which Mr. Knightley demanded two shillings. Mr. William Vaux, whose trunk it was, was by this time come in, and had his part in defence of his trunk : and when my Lord refused to pay the two shillings Mr. Knightley charged the constable to strain two shillings' worth of goods. Mr. William Vaux took Mr. Knightley a blow on the face ; a friend of Mr. Knightley seeing this and prepared to defend him, my Lord struck him on the head with a hawking staff, and after some more scuffling Mr. Knightley etc. departed."⁹

The first round goes to Vaux.

II

It was not to be expected the Lord Vaux's disrespectful treatment of one who came on his Majesty's business would pass unpunished. A warrant was issued on 9 November to Thomas Bond and Leonard Joyner, messengers of His Majesty's Chamber to bring Lord Vaux and William before their Lordships.¹⁰

On Sunday night, 13 November, Lord Vaux found himself once more kneeling at the Council table. There were present the Lord Keeper [Sir Thomas Coventry], Lord Treasurer [Sir James Ley, afterwards 1st Earl of Marlborough], Lord President

[Sir H. Mandeville], Lord Privy Seal [Edward Somerset, Earl of Worcester], the Earl Marshal, the Earl of Montgomery (a friend of the family), the Earl of Carlisle, the Earl of Kelly, Lord Conway, Mr. Treasurer, Mr. Comptroller, Mr. Secretary [John Coke,] the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chancellor of the Duchy. Above all, to mark the importance of the occasion, King Charles was present in person. Though these Acts of the Privy Council are headed "Hampton Court," this Michaelmas term was kept at Reading. Also they are dated 14 November, but it is clear that the hearing was on the Sunday night, the 13th.

"Whereas the Lord Vaux, being formerly sent for by a messenger of his Majesty's Chamber was this day convented before the Board, upon information given by certificate in writing and now reaffirmed *viva voce* before the Board by Sir William Spencer and others, the deputy lieutenants of the county of Northampton, touching the ill carriage and misdemeanour of his Lordship as well in using ill language to Mr. Knightley, one of the deputy Lieutenants, as likewise in striking him and a servant of his at such time as he (with the others) were executing his Majesty's service in making search for arms . . . within the house of the Lady Vaux, a convicted recusant and mother of the Lord Vaux, . . .

"Their Lordships upon debate had thereupon resolved that the said misdemeanours objected against Lord Vaux were of so high a nature as not to be passed by without exemplary punishment, [and] did, for the further proof and discovery of the truth thereof, think fit and order that Mr. Attorney General should forthwith advise of a bill to be preferred against his Lordship in the Court of Star Chamber."¹¹

Sir John Coke wrote on 6 December :

"For the Lord Vaux, I was present at his convention before his Majesty at the Council Board, where he had some prepared friends ; his own carriage was not suitable to the opinion conceived of him."¹²

This last sentence is elucidated by Lord Conway, another eye-witness :

"Their complaint was heard before the King and Council : and there wanted not those that favoured the Lord Vaux's cause and magnified much his natural and accustomed modesty

and discretion ; whereof he gave a very ill argument, giving very intemperate words at the Council chamber door unto Sir William Spencer, upon an occasion that passed before the King.”¹³

These intemperate words have come down to us :

“It was further objected against the Lord Vaux by Sir William Spencer that his Lordship did not forbear, as they two were going together out of the Council Chamber door to give him some upbraiding and reproachful language, viz :— ‘Sir William Spencer, although you have not valued your reputation before the Board in the testimony you have now given against me, yet I hope you will value your oath when you shall come to it in another place [i.e. the Star Chamber].

“Their Lordships called the Lord Vaux again before them and charging him with the said words, the speaking whereof he could not deny, did think fit and order that for this his miscarriage he should stand committed to the Fleet during his Majesty’s pleasure, and that Mr. Attorney-General should take information in Star Chamber as he should find cause. And whereas William Vaux, esquire . . . had misdemeaned himself in foul and insolent speeches used to Mr. Knightley . . . it is ordered that he stand forthwith committed to the Fleet during his Majesty’s pleasure etc.”¹⁴

The warrant to commit Lord Vaux to the Fleet is dated this same 13 November,¹⁵ and Lord Conway says he was “committed prisoner to the warden of the Fleet at Reading.”¹⁶

Joseph Mead adds further detail :

“Mr. Knightley complained to the Council, where my Lord [Vaux] and his brother were on Sunday at night last (the King himself being present) censured to the Fleet, and accordingly committed to so base a prison ; and besides, Mr. Knightley shall enter an action against him in the Star Chamber. The King, as he rose from the council-table said, ‘Now he shall have work enough,’ meaning he [Vaux] should not seek employment at Bergen. Mr. Knightley is to be sheriff.”¹⁷

The allusion is, of course, to Vaux’s service under the Infanta which Charles had thwarted.

Knightley had won the second round, but the third must go to Lord Vaux. Before the end of the month, the list of names for the office of sheriff was sent by the judges to the King to be "pricked." Knightley had a recommendation that was expected to induce the King to over-ride the judges' bill. Lord Conway writes to Buckingham on 30 November, referring to this scene in the Council Chamber:

"This day of hearing was the day the sheriffs were pricked, and Mr. Knightley was one of those extraordinarily recommended, being none of the judges' bill, and never man was more perplexed, arguing that all the world would think it was a punishment laid upon him for my Lord Vaux. But when he saw the rest of his company, then he was like to have lost his sense. He protested the continual and sole dependence he had upon your Grace, and declared his speeches and the endeavours he had used in the parliament for the service of the King and honour of you.

"I enquired of Sir John Cook and others of him, who all justified his good behaviour, but he continues in the school of patience, and seems to promise himself that your Grace will justify him and repair him with the King and all the world when you return . . ." ¹⁸

Mandeville another eye-witness wrote to Lord Montague:

"The last Sunday the quarrel betwixt your deputy Lieutenants and the Lord Vaux and his brother was heard at Council Table in presence of the King. The matter was much laboured for the Lord Vaux, but yet the Deputies I think, were sent home with contentment, except Dick Knightley be discontented with his sheriffwick." ¹⁹

For his tactless handling of the search at Boughton, Knightley was forced to accept the office of sheriff, and was thereby excluded, with others like him, from sitting in the next parliament.

III

The warrant to commit Lord Vaux to the Fleet is dated the very Sunday, 13 November. He was there less than a fortnight, for there is a warrant for his release dated 25 November, and another for the release of William Vaux dated 29 November. ²⁰

They were both allowed to return to Boughton.

A second order for the disarming of recusants had been issued by the Privy Council on 30 October, the day before the scuffle at Boughton.

The following letter was sent to the Lords recusants :

“Whereas his Majesty for some reasons which he hath taken into his royal consideration doth find requisite that at this time your Lordship’s arms and furniture, with all powder, shot, muskets, match, pikes, and all other habiliaments of war whatsoever in your custody or in any wise appertaining unto you should remain, until he shall be pleased to determine otherwise, where they shall be carefully looked unto and kept in good order and repair at your charge ; we have thought fit to signify unto you this his Majesty’s pleasure in this behalf, and do in his Majesty’s name expressly charge and require you to deliver all your said arms etc. to our very good Lord the [blank], who hath directions to receive them, and to take care for the safe keeping of them.”

The Lords recusants were the Marquis of Winchester and his son Lord St. John, the Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord Viscount Montague, Lord Viscount Colchester, Lord Petre, the Earl of Castlehaven, and Lords Morley, Vaux, Evers, Arundel of Wardour, Teynham (Elizabeth Vaux’s brother), Herbert and Windsor. The blank in the letter was more often than not to be filled in with the name of the bishop of the diocese in which the recusant lived. Lord Vaux’s arms were to be delivered to Bishop Dove of Peterborough.²¹

It was not until near Christmas that the Bishop took any action. This was probably because of Vaux’s imprisonment. His letter is dated 27 December, 1625, and is addressed to the Privy Council :

“I received a letter from your Lordships of the 30th of October last, by the contents whereof I do understand that it is his Majesty’s will and pleasure that I should take unto me four Justices of the peace within the county of Northampton, and with their assistance should repair to the house of the Lord Vaux and to receive from him all his arms etc.

“As also I received at the same time another letter directed

to the Lord Vaux, accordingly I took unto me four Justices of the peace within the county, and went up to the Lord Vaux his house, who gave unto us a noble and kind reception. I delivered unto him your Lordships' letters and likewise read unto him the letters which I received from your Lordships, and by virtue thereof demanded his armour, promising withal faithfully unto him that I would keep it safely until his Majesty should otherwise dispose it. His answer was upon his honour he had no armour; his progenitors left him none, neither did he ever buy any, and for the bettering of our knowledge he prayed me and my company to take a view of all his house, which we refused to do being thereunto not expressly commanded by our letters. But he would needs have it so, leading us himself through all the rooms in his house, where indeed we could find none."²²

On this occasion the cudgel was not required.

Meanwhile Richard Knightley, smarting under the insult Lord Vaux had offered him, and the loss of the office of sheriff, was breathing fire and slaughter. He wrote on 26 December to Lord Montague:

"By your Lordship's help you may make Northamptonshire a pattern in this business. It will be worthy of you: it may be of much good. I could wish such care was taken that not one little papist should 'scape, because our knights of the shire may take notice how many papists we have in the county; and if others do the like, there may be a calculation of England by the parliament, that so the King may (as in a glass) see the danger he was in."²³

King Charles was crowned with very little pomp on 2 February, 1626, and parliament assembled on Monday the 6th. The trial of the Vaux brothers was listed for the following Friday, 10 February. At the last minute Vaux got the case deferred by claiming his privilege to be tried by his peers. This set the Lords a poser. In 1612, when Vaux had claimed the same privilege, it had been refused on the grounds that his offence in refusing to take the oath of Allegiance was only a contempt, and that the privilege could only be claimed in cases of treason, misprision of treason, felony and misprision of felony. This was

manipulating the law to suit their convenience, for refusing the oath was punished by *præmunire* or loss of all goods, and felony was by definition a crime punished by forfeiture of property. There seems no good reason in law to have denied Lord Vaux the privilege of trial by his peers in this first case. Indeed it was a clearer case of felony than the crime of resisting and striking the King's deputy. Vaux's plea on this second occasion was, of course, disallowed, but on the novel grounds that he had not taken the Oath of Allegiance.

Lord Montague wrote in his Journal of proceedings in the House of Lords, on 9 February :

“After the Lord Keeper declared unto us that whereas there was to be a hearing to be had tomorrow against the Lord Vaux and his brother, Mr. William Vaux, for foul abuses against Mr. Richard Knightley, one of the deputy-lieutenants of Northamptonshire (setting down the abuses at large), and that the Lord Vaux would challenge privilege, the Lords of the Star Chamber yesterday thought it fit those things to be declared to the Lords and their pleasure known how far they would grant privilege in this case.

“There was some different opinions, especially because the Lord Vaux had not taken the oath of allegiance, and did absent from Parliament because of the same. So some questions were propounded what should be the question. But none being approved on, they thought it fittest to send for the Lord Vaux presently, that it should be demanded of him whether he would take the oath. The Lords sat till he came. And after he had a little while sat in his place he went out, and two Earls were sent out to him, who returned his answer that he would willingly take the oath, and so he came in again to his place ; then it was thought fit the matter of privilege should not be put to question, but allowed by the general vote of the house.

“And the court being adjourned till Saturday [Feb. 11], 9 o'clock, after the Lords of the Council assembling together in the house, both the Earl of Castle Haven, being Lord Audeley and the Lord Vaux took the oath, which I saw and heard them do. Note that the cause in the Star Chamber was proceeded in by especial direction from his Majesty by

way of Information by the Attorney General [Sir Robert Heath].”²⁴

Vaux’s action in taking the oath seems to have caused little stir. It is mentioned in a few contemporary letters, but without any comment. He had apparently taken it once in the preceding reign, though it is not certain. There were several other forms of oath by this time that were allowed in Courts Leet and on lesser occasions. Almost every Catholic peer had by now taken it, and the Catholic writers show no surprise or concern. Fr. John Southcote, a priest working in England, who recorded all passing events in his Notebook, simply states :

“Lord Vaux took the oath of allegiance in Parliament. There were general indictments of Catholics of all sorts and degrees throughout England. There was never the like since persecution began. Many conformed themselves, but the most of all sorts stood constant, February, March, April, May.”²⁵

But the taking of the oath made all the difference to the Knightley case. It was now transferred to the House of Lords and we hear no more about it at all. On 26 June, Lord Vaux and his brother received a general pardon for all offences, except treason and murder, rape and incest.²⁶ Knightley got no satisfaction for the foul abuses and the loss of the Sheriffwick, beyond goods to the value of three shillings, and that went to the poor. But to make his humiliation complete, he had himself been summoned before the Privy Council in the January of this year, together with other puritans from his county, on the charge of refusing to pay the new subsidy.

“The Northamptonshire gentlemen were on Wednesday [January 11th] before the Lords ; at what time Mr. Knightley was committed to the Fleet, not for the refusal of the subsidy, but, as it is said, for not kneeling at the council table when he was called to answer.”²⁷

It was still possible for a papiſt to hold his own against a puritan, even when, as seems obvious in this case, the puritan had the law on his side ; even when the King had personally presided over the hearing and ordered the case to the Star

Chamber. But the influence and the numbers of the papists were waning, while the puritans were gathering strength.

The brabble at Boughton had taken place in the presence of Lord Vaux's mother. This is almost the last reference I have found to the intrepid Elizabeth. The very last is in the will of Mary, Lady Fermor, dated 13 August, 1625, but confirmed 8 April, 1627. She left Elizabeth two long silver boxes with elephants' heads engraved on them, to keep "metridate" and treacle in.²⁸ Elizabeth paid the last penalty of her recusancy. Like Eleanor and Anne and countless others, she has no known resting-place and there is no record of her death. A recusant was excommunicated by the Protestant church and could not be buried in consecrated ground. We learn from a report of Gregory Panzani, who was sent by the Vatican in 1632 to investigate the tension between the secular priests and the Jesuits, that Catholics had a way of getting round this law.

"Catholics are wont to bless a little earth and throw it on the corpse in the coffin, and so to fulfil all the Catholic rite of burial. Afterwards they permit the coffin to be carried to the Protestant ministers, who escort it to the churches with ceremonies and tolling of bells.

"Now, as Catholics who have not communicated after the Protestant rite are held excommunicate by Protestants, and as the bodies of excommunicate persons cannot be interred with ecclesiastical burial and tolling of bells, the Catholics who earnestly desire for their deceased friends and relatives honourable interment in the accustomed places of sepulture, are forced to resort to an artifice. They procure by money an absolution from the excommunication, in which absolution is expressed, according to some authorities, that such or such a person having been excommunicate, has obeyed and has been absolved. This seems to contain an act of protestantism. Others, on the contrary, allege that obedience is not put into the absolution. However, the absolution is universally received. Even tender-minded Catholics make no scruple of taking it. Further information on this subject is required."²⁹

This was no doubt the general practice, and there are some quite prominent recusants who were buried about this time with suitable monuments in the parish churches. But there are others

whose deaths seem to be entirely unrecorded, and the three Vuax heroines are of that number. Perhaps they disdained to receive this last act of christian charity from the hands of Protestant ministers who were the instruments of their bitter tribulations. Perhaps they preferred to be laid to rest in the dead of night, in some quiet, unhallowed glade, by the priest who had ministered to them that risk of his life.

The Vuax heroines were three young women, the daughters of a noble family, who had been educated in the most liberal and liberal manner. They were all of them very beautiful, and very accomplished. They were all of them very generous, and very brave. They were all of them very devoted to their country, and very devoted to their religion. They were all of them very devoted to their friends, and very devoted to their family. They were all of them very devoted to their country, and very devoted to their religion. They were all of them very devoted to their friends, and very devoted to their family.

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CHAPTER VI

EDWARD

I

THE only advantage that Lord Vaux reaped by taking the oath of allegiance was that his case with Richard Knightley was removed from the Star Chamber to the House of Lords and then apparently forgotten. He, of course, remained a recusant, refusing to attend Protestant worship, and was subject to all the penalties of recusancy. He had satisfied the King as to his loyalty but received no relief from the fines and restrictions of the statute. Nothing could make it clearer that the real object of these laws was not to ensure the safety of the King, but to stamp out the old religion. Perhaps his taking of the oath made it easier and cheaper to obtain concessions, but it did not of itself remove any of the burdens that were slowly but inexorably crushing the papists into a dwindling and despised minority. The wording of the following licence granted on 25 July, 1626, five months after his taking the oath, shows to what little extent he was trusted. One attendance at Protestant worship would have removed all the penalties: his oath of allegiance removed none of them.

“Whereas the Lord Vaux, a recusant convict and remaining confined according to the limitation of the statute, hath made humble suit unto us for our licence to travel out of his confinement for the following of some suits in law and other urgent occasions much concerning him in his private estate, and requiring his own personal attendance in the dispatch thereof, the which we have been moved hereby to grant unto him, as well for the reasons aforesaid as for that he hath of late given good testimony to his Majesty of his good inclinations to that [which] the State may require of him, and is not like to make any ill use of this favour. This shall be therefore to signify to all persons whom the same may in any way concern, that we do hereby grant licence unto the said Lord

Vaux to travel out of his confinement to any such parts and places in the kingdom as his occasions shall require during the space of six months next ensuing the date hereof, without any prejudice or advantage to be taken against him upon statute touching confinement of recusants ; which time being expired he is again to remain confined as before.”¹

For the next four years we hear nothing of him. There is, however, a reference to one of his old servants. The Attorney General writes in February, 1627.

“I find by your honour’s letter dated 3 February that his Majesty is graciously pleased that one William Sturley, a professed Romish Catholic and sometime footman to the Lady Vaux, now a prisoner in Newgate, should be set at liberty upon good sureties to appear within ten days’ warning when he should be called for. And thereupon I have accordingly taken bonds of him to his Majesty’s use, conceiving the same most properly to be taken before myself. And so I humbly recommend him to your honour to give your warrant for his discharge according as you shall think fit.”²

There is also a list of “priests and Jesuits now in England” that seems to belong to 1629 and includes

“Father Bentley, a Jesuit, cousin to my Lord Vaux and much with him.”³

This is probably the son of Edward Bentley of Little Oakley, whose carpenter made the little beads for rosaries. Edward’s wife was a Roper, which explains his relationship with Lord Vaux.

If, however, we have no news of Edward during these years, we must at least suspect that he was beginning the most mysterious episode in his career. This case soon became a *cause célèbre*, and remains one of the most interesting cases in English law. It has been treated exhaustively elsewhere,⁴ but the mystery has never been solved.

Briefly the facts are as follow :

At some unspecified date Lord Vaux began an alleged illicit love affair with Elizabeth Countess of Banbury. Such conduct was not, of course, unknown in the reign of Charles I, but what

adds the spice of romance is the fact that she was the lady whom Lord Vaux was on the verge of marrying in 1605, twenty years before. If we may believe his mother it was only the Gunpowder Plot that prevented his going up to London and becoming legally affianced. In January, 1606, Elizabeth had married William Lord Knollys, who was created Earl of Banbury in 1626. Elizabeth at the time of her marriage was nineteen and her husband fifty-nine. For twenty years she apparently bore no children, and then on 10 April, 1627, she had a son, Edward, and on 3 January, 1631, another, Nicholas. One of these children were born at Harrowden Hall, and not without some justification they were fathered on Lord Vaux.

But the evidence is conflicting. The Earl of Banbury, now nearly eighty, though hale and hearty and still hunting, was sublimely ignorant of the existence of these two children, and never mentioned them in his will. On the other hand we have the sworn statements of the two nurses :

“Anne Delavill saith she knoweth him [Edward] to be the son of William Earl of Banbury, being at his birth.

“Did she lie in publicly ?

“All the house she was in knew it. She lay in at Harrowden, in Northamptonshire. Harrowden is Lord Vaux’s house.

“Did William E. of Banbury see the child ?

“I was not there to know it. The Lady was there before to take waters at Wellingborough, but whether at this time I know not. I daresay a child was born then of the lady.”

I give this evidence *verbatim*, being unable to make much sense of it. The nurse of the second child is, however, quite coherent :

“Mary Ogden : I know Nicolas Earl of Banbury. He was born a year and a quarter before old E. died. I was at his birth. I was his nurse, but was not at his christening because I was not of their opinion [i.e. not a Catholic]. I nursed him fifteen months in the house at Harrowden . . .

“I know not whether William E. knew his lady lay in, but he visited her.

“What was the child called ?

“Nicholas ; and was carried ordinarily up and down the house.

"Did strangers see him?"

"The household saw him . . . I never knew him called Nicholas Vaux in my life."⁵

There is extant a letter written by the Countess of Banbury to Viscount Dorchester (Dudley Carleton) dated 23 March, 1630, which shows that she and Lord Vaux were at least on visiting terms :

"I shall faithfully do you all the service I can and give your Lordship as speedily an account as I can. My Lord Vaux will be here tomorrow : him I know will readily send one to Sir George Simmons . . ."⁶

There is also a curious statement in the report of Gregory Panzani, concerning Catholic affairs in England c. 1632. Referring to the Protest drawn up by some Catholic peers, in August, 1631, against the appointment of Richard Smith as Vicar Apostolic, he says that twelve noblemen subscribed the Protest, and five others gave verbal assent. Among these five was Lord Vaux, and Panzani comments :

"5. Baron Vaux of Harrowden. It is no wonder that this peer consented. For being admonished of an error by his secular confessor, and afterwards abandoned by the same, he found the Jesuits propitious."⁷

This may refer to some public scandal connected with the Countess of Banbury.

Other evidence there is none, and gossip was put to silence in 1632, when the old Earl died and Lord Vaux promptly married the Countess. This did not of course settle the vexed question of the paternity of the children, but for the time being it had no practical importance.

Apart from this scandal and subsequent marriage Lord Vaux was not very prominent during these years. What little interest there is centres round other members of the family.

His youngest brother, Henry, who was serving in the English regiment in Flanders came home to Boughton, as we learn from the following letter of the Privy Council, dated 28 April, 1628 :

"Whereas his Majesty by his proclamation, bearing date the 11th day of September 1625, did command all his natural born

subjects . . . who were in service of the Emperor, the King of Spain or the Archduchess [of Austria] within forty days after the publishing of the said proclamation, if possibly it might be, or within as short a time as they could, to return . . . into their native countries, and there to register their names; forasmuch as Captain Henry Vaux, being in the service of the said Archduchess, . . . and being by reason of sickness and indisposition of health constrained to remain in parts beyond the seas till of late, is now come over, and hath made humble suit that his name may be entered in the register of Council causes: their lordships . . . have, for the petitioner's indemnity, thought fit that his name be entered in the Council book, according to his request. Nevertheless they have ordered that, before the entry thereof, Captain Vaux shall give bond with good sureties to be ready and forthcoming to tender his personal appearance before the Board within ten days after notice given him or left at Boughton near Northampton on that behalf."⁸

Mother Joyce Vaux was in Rome, where the English ladies were having a difficult time. Their strange innovations shocked the Roman ecclesiastics, and their devotion to the Jesuits put most of the English secular clergy against them. The letters about them are invariably unsympathetic. They offended against all the conventions. They dressed in the height of fashion in England, and of a fashion that was certainly not prudish. Above all they refused to observe any rules of enclosure. Michael Branthwaite sums up the situation in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, written from Venice on 19 January, 1623:

"I learn that in Rome there be about 12 English women who have undertaken to teach those of their own sex, after the manner of the Jesuits without hire, aspiring to make such a feminine order with ensigns of Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience, but because they would walk abroad at pleasure and return to their convent when they please, his Holiness hath utterly denied them any such grace, so that before long they may hang out for their sign Burdello [brothel] where I will leave them to the haunters of such places."⁹

On 23 July, 1624, Mary Ward writes from Perugia, where she was opening a new house, to say that she intends to make Mother

Joyce its first Superior.¹⁰ Then in 1631 the blow fell. The Institute was suppressed by Bull of Urban VIII. Some of the nuns carried on in Germany as a lay society, but Mary Ward, with characteristic loyalty, immediately submitted and set about the task of re-forming her foundation on more conventional lines. What happened to Mother Joyce is not very clear, and we hear nothing more of her for many years.

As we have seen, Eleanor Vaux died about 1625. Anne, with Fr. William Wright and the rest of the "convent," moved from Shoby to Stanley Grange in Derbyshire. This house, now a barn, belonged to the Powdrells, and was situated near their house at West Hallam, which Campion had visited in 1581. Curiously enough local tradition holds that both the house at Shoby, now called Priory Farm, and Stanley Grange were once monastic houses. Neither in fact ever belonged to a monastery, and the tradition may owe its origin to the conventual character of the establishments presided over by Mistress Anne.

The following document casts some doubt on the identity of the mistress of Stanley Grange. She is called "sister" of Lord Vaux, whereas Mistress Anne was, of course, his aunt. Lord Vaux had no sister Anne. Mary and Catherine were married by this time, and would hardly be referred to by their maiden names, and Joyce was a nun abroad. But the question is settled beyond reasonable doubt by the declaration of Eleanor's grandson Edward Thimelby, on his admission to the English College in Rome. In the summary of this document given by Foley, Thimelby seems to contrast Anne Vaux who brought him up, with the aunt who kept the school at Stanley Grange, but the Latin original gives no support to the contrast. Having described his early adoption, he gives several pages of biographical details about his family, and then says: "After I had studied in the house of Aunt Vaux in Derbyshire till my fourteenth year, I went to St. Omers."¹¹ This would more naturally mean Anne Vaux, whom he has mentioned earlier, than some other member of the family. Also it is unlikely that he would use the word "aunt" (*amita*) for Lord Vaux's sisters, who were his first cousins once removed, but he might well use the word to describe his great-aunt.

The earliest reference to Stanley Grange is in a letter from Sir Francis Coke to Sir John Coke, dated 17 November, 1625:

"At Stanley Grange, a house standing alone in Appletree Hundred, the doors were at first shut against us, but after a little while opened, where we found only two women in the house, who gave us to understand that the Grange belonged to one Mrs. Vaux, a farmer thereof to Mrs. Powdrell of West Hallam, dwelling within a quarter of a mile of the said Grange, both the one and the other being notorious recusants. Upon search of the said house we found so many rooms and chambers as I have never seen in so small a content of ground, and amongst others there were two chapels, one opening into the other, and in either of them a table set to the upper end for an altar, and stools and cushions laid as though they had been lately at Mass. Over the altars there were crucifixes set, and other pictures about. There were beds and furniture for them in that little house to lodge forty or fifty persons at the least."¹²

In spite of this unwelcome visit and the suspicious character of the house, no action seems to have been taken for ten years. Then, on 8 October, 1635, Archbishop Laud was informed :

"This place where most of the gentlemen's sons do remain is in Derbyshire, four miles off from Derby town, at one Mrs. Anne Vaux's house called Stanley Grange, sister to the Lord Vaux, where there is the Lord Abergavenny's grandchild, with one Mr. Fossiter's son, and divers more which cometh to the number of ten or eleven."¹³

Consequently a warrant was drawn up, of which only an undated draft is extant :

"Whereas we are informed that there is a school kept at the house of Mrs. Vaux, called Stanley Grange in the county of Derby, and that there are the sons of divers persons of quality brought up under the tutorage of the Jesuits, contrary to the laws of this kingdom. These are therefore to will and require you to make your repair to the house of the said Mrs. Vaux . . . And there if you shall find any Jesuits or other suspected person, to apprehend him or them, and cause them to be brought up hither to be examined by us, as also all such children as you shall find there; and if they be dispersed, to inform yourself, by the best ways and means you can possible,

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was a warm blanket of silence. The air was still, and the sun was just beginning to rise, painting the sky in soft, golden hues. I took a deep breath, feeling the coolness of the morning air against my skin. The world around me seemed to be holding its breath, waiting for something to happen. I walked slowly, my feet sinking into the soft grass. The sound of my footsteps was the only noise I could hear. I felt a sense of peace and tranquility that I had never experienced before. It was as if I had found a hidden gem in a vast, unexplored world. The silence was not empty; it was full of potential, full of possibilities. I knew that this was my chance to start over, to begin a new chapter in my life. I took a deep breath and walked forward, embracing the silence and the beauty of the morning.

In the heart of the city, the streets were filled with the sounds of life. The cars honked, the people talked, and the music of the city was everywhere. I walked through the crowd, feeling the energy of the city around me. The streets were wide and open, and the sky was a clear, bright blue. I felt a sense of freedom and liberation that I had never felt before. It was as if I had found a new world, a new place where I could be who I truly was. I took a deep breath and walked forward, embracing the life and the beauty of the city.

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whose sons they are, how long they were there at school, and where they now remain.

"As also to seize upon all such books, papers, and massing stuff as you shall find in the said house, and locking them up in a chest or trunk, cause them also to be sent up hither to be disposed of as we shall think fit and give directions therein."¹⁴

Whether or no the school was dispersed, Mistress Vaux was still there in February, 1637, when the parish register of West Hallam records the burial of Thomas Higgins, *servus dominae Faux*,¹⁵ and tantalizingly does not give her christian name. This is the latest reference to Mistress Anne, but Stanley Grange remained long after a great centre of Jesuit activity. In 1681 it was inhabited by one Captain Shireburne, "a great papist. ' . . a letter-carrier, as was reported, and one that sold their books."¹⁶ In 1682 there was "Great news from Derbyshire . . . discovery of above thirty priests residing in and about Hallam."¹⁷

Indeed the Jesuit mission in this locality never died out, and is now represented by Mount St. Mary's College, Chesterfield. In so far as this school still possesses school books marked "Stanley Grange." it may justly claim to be a continuation of the school begun under such adverse conditions by Mistress Anne and her friends.

II

The Puritans both in England and Scotland had been gathering strength throughout this reign, and matters came to a head in 1638 when the King tried to impose on the Scots a Book of Common Prayer and a liturgy after the Anglican model. This was a high-handed and impudent move as Charles was not supreme head of the Scottish Kirk, and the Scots resisted with a fervour that south of the border would be called fanaticism. They left the practical task of wrecking the new preachers' meetings to the "christian valyancie of the godly women." The women were equal to the task: they discovered (and the preachers discovered too) that their heavy clasp-bibles not only contained the pure word of God, but also made excellent missiles. The new prayer-book got less than a fair hearing; it smacked of popery, and the Scots would have none of it.

King Charles, greatly mortified, decided that the only remedy was to oppose bibles with bullets. The Lords Lieutenants were ordered to muster the trained bands throughout the shires. A summons was sent on 16 January, 1639, to each nobleman "hereby to require you to attend our Royal person and standard at our city of York by the first day of April next ensuing, in such equipage and with forces of horse as your birth and honour and your interest in the public safety do oblige you unto . . . We require you to certify us under your hands 15 days after the receipt, what assistance we shall expect from you herein."¹⁸

Here the Catholics showed the King a loyalty and devotion that he had done nothing to deserve. They realized that if he had beaten them with whips the Puritans would beat them with scorpions. Lord Vaux wrote to Secretary Windebank on 13 February :

"In obedience to his maisties comand receaued by a lett^r under his Royal signature dated y^e 16 of January, wth y^e tender of my most humble and loyall affection to his seruice I present unto you theese fewe lines trewe wittneses of my ready and forward hart to laye downe my life and fortune att his sacred feete, only sorry that y^e pouerty of my estate affourds me not ablitye to attend on his maisteye and this occasion in such manner as I hartely desire, but howsoeuer, by god allmighty his fauour, I will waite uppon him in person wth 8 or 10 horse furnished in fittest and best equipage I cann, beseechinge yu that by y^r fauourable report, his maiesty will be pleased graciously to accept of w^{ht} my meane estate and abilitye will permitt, not measureinge my faithfull minde to doe him seruice by ye weaknes of my power, and I shall euer pray for y^e prosperety of his maiesty and his Royall issue, and rest

Your honors humble seruant,
Harroden."¹⁹

However he changed his mind, for there is a list of contributions towards his Majesty's expedition into the northern parts, from certain of the nobility "to purge their personal attendance upon his Majesty at York" and Lord Vaux's contribution is £300.²⁰

The King was also in dire need of money, and of course it was the papists that were bled. Doubtless they preferred Charles

to the puritans as the lesser evil, but it needed the bludgeon to force further contributions from them. There is an instructive manuscript headed :

“Advices and motives for the noblemen, knights and gentlemen that shall employ themselves in the country in soliciting Catholics for a contribution to his Majesty, upon occasion of his present northern journey.”²¹ It might be called, “Fourteen ways of getting money out of papists.” One or two “motives” will suffice to show with what alacrity the Catholics were expected to come forward with their offerings.

“To make them apprehend by one instance how much it importeth them upon this occasion to merit at the King’s and Queen’s hands, you may let them know there hath been lately granted to one Pulford, a commission to indict and convict such Catholics as yet are not, and to question compositions already made, upon pretence of their having passed at too low a rate, and to prosecute the rest of the laws against them, and that thereupon he hath set on work many agents in several parts, and hath erected an office for that service.” By the Queen’s meditation this has been suspended, but the condition of Catholics will “much alter . . . either to the better or the worser, according as we shall express ourselves affectionate or cold.”

Recusants who think they have already paid enough in fines and compositions are reminded that they pay these as “an annual certainty and so settled into the substance of their estate, as ought not to divert this extraordinary action, which is to receive its allotment and proportion out of what remaineth.”

Noblemen who contend that they have already contributed are to be told that they have done so in common with the Protestants, whereas this new levy “concerneth them only as Catholics.”

There are various threats to put the laws in execution against those whose wives and children are Catholics, and those who appear “cold in this work” are to be reported, and are threatened with the loss of any privileges they may have bought.

There is nothing to show whether Lord Vaux paid again.

The King’s expedition achieved nothing, and after much fruitless haggling the King found himself at the mercy of the

triumphant Puritan party. The Long Parliament assembled on 3 November, 1640, and a royal proclamation banished all priests under pain of death. Persecution more violent than any since Elizabeth's reign blazed up again. After a respite of ten years, the capital penalty was again enforced. Two priests suffered the death of traitors in 1641, and nine in 1642. In 1643 there were two more, both of them associated with Northamptonshire. Henry Heath a Franciscan, was a native of Peterborough, and the entry of his baptism may still be seen in the registers of St. John's Church. Arthur Bell, also a Franciscan, was on his way from Brigstock to London when he was captured. There were three executions in 1644 including Robert Price of Washingley, whose parish church which he did not attend was Lutton (Northants.). He was shot in cold blood by Puritan soldiers at the storming of Lincoln. It was at Washingley that Edmund Campion had left his books during his tour of the north. Two Jesuits were executed in 1645 and four more priests in 1646 a total of twenty-two in six years.

Lord Vaux was living in Paris in March, 1641, but whether he had fled from the persecution is not known. He seems to have been in poor health. Sir Francis Windebank wrote from Paris on 9 April:

"Lord Vaux is fallen into an ague, and has had three or four fits."²²

In his absence, on 20 January, 1642, parliament ordered Harrowden Hall to be searched yet again. Four justices of the peace were "to search the house of Lord Vaux at Harrowden, and such other suspected places in Northamptonshire for recusancy, as they shall think fit, for arms, and to seize whomsoever they might find and place them in safe custody."²³ The search seems to have been fruitless, but the justices appear to have contented themselves with stealing some timber from Harrowden, for the defences of Northampton.²⁴

By June of this year Vaux was back in England for it was then ordered

"That a warrant shall issue forth under the Speakers hand for Mr. Vaux [*sic*], his wife and his two servants, with their baggage, to pass over sea into France, provided they carry no

prohibited goods." She was allowed to take six coach-horses and three nags.²⁵

But whether they went to France at this time is doubtful. On 16 March, 1643, the House of Commons "desired a conference with the Lords, to represent what had been that day reported from the Committee concerning the Countess of Banbury: and to desire that in regard it is informed that she is a recusant and one that entertains intelligence, that she may be confined to her house."²⁶ On 12 July, the Commons resolved "that the Countess of Banbury, a professed papist, shall be secured, and the Lords' concurrence desired therein."²⁷ On 12 August the House appointed three of its members to open certain trunks in the house of a Mr. Trenchard, which were suspected to belong to the Countess of Banbury, and sent thither by the Earl of Bedford; and if they found that they were hers, to send them to the Guildhall.²⁸ On 18 August the Commons determined to request the Lords to join with the House, "that the Countess of Banbury be forthwith removed from London, or otherwise that her person may be secured."

The absence of any mention of Lord Vaux suggests that he was already safely abroad, but there is no evidence. At last his wife got permission to go to France, taking twelve servants and her apparel, and for "a coach and six horses and ten saddle horses to pass to the seaside, and to return to carry her ladyship and her servants to the port where she embarks."²⁹

Having allowed her to leave the country, the Commons gave notice "to the several ports, that if the Countess of Banbury shall come into any of the ports, that they seize her and keep her under restraint, until the House shall take further order."³⁰

These extracts are enough to show the hunted sort of existence to which the Catholic nobility were condemned during the Long Parliament.

No mention is made of her two sons, probably because they were already abroad. Edward the elder was travelling in Italy in January, 1644, and is mentioned by Evelyn in his Diary. In June, 1645, he was killed, between Calais and Gravelines, in a quarrel and lies buried in the church of the Friars Minims at Calais.

Nicholas the younger was with his mother in France in 1644, and they both returned to England with Lord Vaux in 1645.

In February, 1645, Lord Vaux was involved in a lawsuit with Theodosia Tresham, widow of Sir William Tresham, Sir Thomas' grandson. She was living at Lyveden Old Beild, which still belonged to the family, and was sued by Lord Vaux for the Rectory and Parsonage of Irthlingborough, which had been a constant source of litigation. The case³¹ is of no interest except to show that the relations between these two old families were not what they had been.

On 19 October, 1646, Lord Vaux settled on "Nicholas, now Earl of Banbury, son of the Countess of Banbury, hitherto called Nicholas Vaux" all his property in Great and Little Harrowden, Irthlingborough, Burton Latimer and other lands in Northamptonshire. This was perhaps to avoid sequestration, for Nicholas was not a convicted recusant. By now Lord Vaux must have seen the writing on the wall. On 14 June of the previous year the forces of the King had been soundly defeated at Naseby, only some seven miles from Boughton. Troops were evidently billeted at Boughton, for in a lawsuit in 1647 Vaux complains that "in the late times of trouble and distraction" unruly soldiers had looted his muniments.³²

At last, in January 1647, the King was surrendered to the Parliamentary forces, and on 16 February he was brought a prisoner to the royal palace of Holdenby only ten miles from Harrowden, and even less from Boughton. Here he remained till 4 June. It was during this period that the broken monarch accepted the hospitality of the papist nobleman who, more than twenty years before, had knelt before him in the Council room to answer for his assault on Richard Knightley.

Sir Thomas Herbert who was one of the King's retinue, tells us in his memoirs :

"The King every Sunday sequestered himself to his private devotion, and all other days in the week spent two or three hours in reading and other pious exercises ; at other times, for recreation, would after meals play a game of chess, and, for health sake, walk oft in the garden at Holmby with one or other of the Commissioners ; and in regard there was no

bowling-green then well kept at Holmby, the King would sometimes ride to Harrowden, a house of the Lord Vaux's about nine miles off, where there was a good bowling-green, with gardens, groves, and walks, that afforded much pleasure. And other whiles to Althorpe, a fair house about two or three miles from Holmby belonging to the Lord Spencer, now Earl of Sunderland, where also there was a green well kept."³³

Sir Thomas Herbert wrote his Memoirs when he was an old man, at the request of Dugdale the antiquarian, and it is possible that his memory played him false, or was wrongly prompted by Dugdale. For it is certain that King Charles played bowls with Lord Vaux at Boughton, and it is hardly likely that Vaux was living at Harrowden as well during those few months. The visits to Boughton are attested by a Jesuit who was soon to lay down his life for his faith, Blessed Peter Wright. He was born at Slipton, and was the last Northamptonshire martyr. In a letter dated from London "this 23rd April, 1647," when the King was actually at Holdenby, he says

"The Scottish Commissioners . . . are at length come to town to join our Commissioners to try if they can persuade his Majesty to take the Covenant and pass the resolutions, and 'tis said they will give him ten days to consider, at the end of which, if he refuses, then let him look to himself. He, on the contrary side, remains the same and seems resolved to condescend unto them in nothing. He hath leave now to go some days in the week to the Lord Vaux's house at Boughton to bowls."³⁴

Possibly both accounts are right, for Bridges preserves the Boughton tradition,³⁵ while Harrowden still shows the bowling green on which the King is said to have played.

It was now just a hundred years since England had turned officially Protestant. Before many more months had passed, on 30 January, 1649, the extremists of the new religion had executed the supreme head of the church, and the huge throng in Whitehall were endeavouring, popishwise, to dip their handkerchiefs in his blood.

III

The Commonwealth will be remembered, by all who love beautiful things, for the thorough way in which it put the finishing touches to the great work of reform inaugurated by Henry VIII. The suppression of the monasteries, the defacing of the church plate under Edward VI, and the destruction of vestments, roods, images and stained glass in the first years of Elizabeth, had already deprived the country of most of its artistic treasures. All that was left for Cromwell and his zealots was to mutilate the ancient tombs, tear down the carved stalls and destroy the profane organs. Each successive stage in this all-embracing vandalism was carried out in the name of godly religion. What for one generation of Protestants were objects of piety became for the next objects of popery and superstition. "Papist" was a term of relative reproach. Henry VIII, who had done so little to deserve it, was denounced as a papist soon after his death,³⁶ and Archbishop Laud, who would be a moderate churchman today aroused tremendous enmity by his alleged popery, a hundred years later, and had to be eliminated. Northamptonshire still bears the scars of this last wanton desecration. We need only mention the tomb of Abbot Chambers in Peterborough Cathedral, and Tresham's lovely New Beild at Lyveden, built in honour of the Passion in the form of a cross, and therefore marked out for insult and pillage.

Throughout this hundred years every member of the Vaux family had, to borrow a phrase from old Fuller, "like an axle tree stood firm and fixed in his own judgment whilst the times, like the wheels, turned backwards and forwards round about him." Six of them had suffered imprisonment for the faith, one had lived in perpetual exile, and all had felt the financial oppression of the penal laws. Now at the age of sixty Edward Lord Vaux had to brace himself for a persecution, more rigorous than he at least had known before.

It was not that the Roundheads reproduced in England the bloody butchery that marked their work in Ireland. Only two priests suffered at Tyburn under Cromwell. One was Blessed Peter Wright, mentioned above, and the other was Blessed John Southworth whose body now lies in Westminster Cathedral. But the Puritans hated everything that the Catholics particularly

cherished. It was no longer a question simply of papal supremacy but of the whole body of traditional Catholic teaching. In place of the Oath of Allegiance, which many Catholics had considered legitimate, the Puritans substituted an Oath of Abjuration, which runs as follows :

"I A.B do abjure and renounce the pope's supremacy and authority over the Catholic Church in general and over myself in particular. And I do believe that there is not any transubstantiation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper or in the Elements of bread and wine after consecration thereof by any person whatsoever. And I do also believe that there is not any purgatory and that the consecrated host, crucifixes or images ought not to be worshipped, neither that any worship is due unto any of them.. And I do also believe that salvation cannot be merited by works, and all doctrines in affirmation of the said points I do abjure and renounce without any equivocation, mental reservation or secret evasion whatsoever, taking the words by me spoken according to the common and usual meaning of them. So help me God."³⁷

In addition to this frontal attack there was, as we should expect after a civil war, a spiteful vindictiveness against all who had sided with the King. The Puritans classified their enemies as Delinquents (those who had supported the King), Papists and Delinquents, and Papists pure and simple. All were condemned to the sequestration of their property, the delinquents losing all or at best four fifths, the papists two thirds, and were forced to compound for it at exorbitant rates. The list of victims for the East Division of Northamptonshire, drawn up in March, 1648, before the King's execution, comprises forty-three delinquents (many of them Catholic names) and the following :

Papists and Delinquents

Earl of Worcester	Oundle
William Bawde	Walgrave
Thomas Lord Brudenell	Dene
Millicent Pratt	Desthorp

Papists

Lord Vaux of Harrowden	
Thomas Aprice	Tansor

Sir William and Lady Tresham	Lyveden
George Allicock	Sibbertoft
George Poulton	Desborough
Sir William Andrews	Addington ³⁸

Even the sale (real and fictitious) of property to conformists did not save it from the penalty of sequestration. Thus we read :

"1 May 1649. Francis Harvey and Daniel Reading beg to compound for two-thirds of Pattenham [Pavenham] Manor, co. Bedford, bought from Lord Vaux and sequestered for his recusancy."

In June they were made to pay a fine of £453 6. 8d. by way of composition.

In July Lord Howard of Escrick petitions that "having lately purchased of Lord Vaux and Lady Elizabeth, Countess of Banbury, his wife, the manor of Cholsey (Berks.), and finding two-thirds sequestered for their recusancy, he may compound etc."³⁹

Lord Vaux seems at this time to have been hastily disposing of most of his property, and it must have been on very disadvantageous terms. On 11 May, 1650, he obtained a permit to go beyond the seas with four servants.⁴⁰ He did not, however, leave immediately for on 9 August he entered into bonds in £2,000 for his good behaviour and was licenced to leave England with the same four servants.⁴¹ He was back again by February, 1651, for we find him remonstrating against his assessment of £2,000 to be contributed to what is quaintly called the Committee for the Advance of Money. He pleads that he is no delinquent but only a papist. The County Commissioners are ordered to certify whether he is sequestered for recusancy or delinquency. Here he was in luck for they found that he had not been returned from any county either as a recusant or a delinquent, and his assessment was discharged.⁴²

It is clear from the records of the Committee for Compounding that the Recusants were being systematically tracked down and sequestered with a thoroughness never known before, and all their skilful evasive action, born of long experience, was now of no avail.

In spite of the anxieties of these days it was in 1653 that Lord

Vaux published his only work, "The Life of the Apostle St. Paul written in French by the famous Bishop of Grasse and now Englished by a Person of Honour." It was published in 24to in London. "Printed by James Young for Henry Twyford, and are to be sold at his shop in Vine Court, Middle Temple 1653." The dedication to Lord Vaux makes it clear that the translation of this "choise piece" was his work. It is prefixed by an engraving by Hollar of St. Paul preaching, which is also dated 1653, and was presumably specially done for this book.⁴³

The only documents concerning Lord Vaux during the years of the Protectorate are various petitions addressed to the Commissioners for Compounding. On 19 January, 1654, he petitioned as follows :

"That two third parts of your petitioner's estate is sequestered for his recusancy only, and he being desirous (according to an Act of Parliament of the 21 of October 1653) to contract for the same, your petitioner prays that he may be admitted to contract for the same according to the said Act . . . and to have a proportionable abatement made him for all incumbrances charged upon the same. And if hereafter there shall be granted any mitigation of the rates prescribed by the said Act, or other advantage had, that the Petitioner may have the benefit thereof."⁴⁴

He signs himself no longer "Harrowden" but simply "E. Vaux."

A month later, on 16 February, the first item on the proceedings in Council is :

"The Earl of Newport and Lord Vaux having been apprehended on a warrant touching challenge, and attending at the door, order that Lord Lisle and Major General Lambert accommodate the business."

The Earl of Newport was father of Isabella who had married Vaux's reputed son, Nicholas Earl of Banbury, and the challenge probably concerned the marriage settlement of 1649, which led to a lawsuit in 1655.⁴⁵ Nicholas and his wife were another source of anxiety to Lord Vaux, as the following petition shows.

"Petition of Nicholas, Earl of Banbury, Isabella his wife,

And the first thing that I observed when I came to the city was that the people were very much altered from what I had seen in the country. They were more civil and more polite, and they were more acquainted with the world. I was surprised to find that they were so much more acquainted with the world than the people in the country. I was surprised to find that they were so much more acquainted with the world than the people in the country.

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Edward Lord Vaux of Harrowden, and Elizabeth, Countess Dowager of Banbury, his wife, mother of the Earl of Banbury, to the Protector.

"The earl and countess, being both very young, have run themselves into debt, £10,000, for which the earl has long lain in the Upper Bench Prison, and they cannot pay without sale of lands, which they cannot sell because the lands are sequestered for recusancy of Lord Vaux, though the earl and countess are firm and constant Protestants."⁴⁶

There is also a petition to the Protector from twenty-six London tradesmen, which informs him :

"We have supplied the Earl of and Countess Banbury with goods to great value, and some of us become bound for them in large sums. Lord Vaux and his wife the Countess of Banbury, mother of the earl were willing to pay the debts from their own estates to procure the Earl's liberation from prison, and on the late Act enabling recusants to compound for their estates had agreed with the Haberdasher's Hall Commissioners for discharge of their estate, but you having suspended that Act the composition was laid aside and thus we are disappointed of payment."⁴⁷

It would appear that Lord Vaux and his wife were living at this time at Dorking, probably at Deepdene where Charles Howard had an "amphitheatre, garden and solitary recess, being fifteen acres environed by a hill" and an "elaboratory."⁴⁸ On 18 March, 1658, his wife died and was buried in the parish church there. Cromwell died in the following September, and after the brief and stormy protectorate of his son Richard, Charles II was restored on 5 May, 1660. On 28 June, Lord Vaux addressed a petition to the new King, pointing out that for many years he had suffered under a decree of sequestration of his estate in Northamptonshire, upon pretence of recusancy, whereas by the laws of the realm he was not, nor ought to be, liable thereunto. But he could not till now, by reason of the violence of the times appeal to any legal power for relief. Besides the loss of his lands, there was taken from him by the sequestrators personal estate to the value of £10,000 and upwards, by which great oppressions he is exposed to very great wants, not having above

£300 per annum for the maintenance of himself and family. He prays that an order may be granted to suspend the levying of any further money upon his estate till the merits of his case shall be heard and determined."⁴⁹

His petition was allowed and all sequestrations were suspended, but he could have derived little benefit, for on 8 September, 1661, five days short of his seventy-third birthday he died at Dorking and was buried with his wife. The monument has been removed, but the inscription is preserved.⁵¹ He had been born when the defeated, storm-battered Armada was limping back to Spain, and had held the title sixty-six years. He had watched Catholicism glow white and slowly melt away in the fire of persecution. He had watched his own family estates dwindling away in the same persecution. He had carried on the tradition of his grandfather, his mother and his aunts. He had kept the Faith.

IV

Edward Lord Vaux was succeeded by his youngest brother Henry (William having died) who became fifth Baron Vaux. Henry was now seventy and had been living very quietly at Eye (Suffolk) since 1638 at least.⁵² At some unknown date, probably soon after the Mary Ward foundation was suppressed by the Holy See in 1631, his sister Joyce, the nun, had come over to England and joined him at Eye. There is nothing to show whether she still considered herself a nun.

There is a petition from Henry dated 18 January, 1654, similar to the petitions above, begging to contract for his estate sequestered for his recusancy.⁵³ Otherwise there is no record of him. He never seems to have bothered to claim the title after the restoration of the House of Lords,⁵⁴ and he never sat in Parliament.

His brother had left him little more than an empty title. Edward's last will shows to what extent the family had been impoverished by eighty years of persecution.

"My body I desire to have interred by my late-deceased wife in Dorking Church, and to be carried thither in as private and plain a manner as may be with decency, without the ceremony of inviting any to accompany it, but those of Mr. Belson's own family and my servants. As concerning the

disposition of that little estate I shall leave behind me, my Will is as followeth :

"First I give unto my brother, Mr. Henry Vaux, ten pounds in money to buy him mourning, and my silver tankard : I give likewise to my sister Mrs. Joyce Vaux ten pounds to buy her mourning, and my silver porringer and spoon being all the plate I have left : I also give to the Earl of Banbury and his Lady ten pounds apiece to buy each of them mourning. I give to Mrs. Belson, wife of Augustine Belson, Esq., the bed I lie on, with the bedstead, curtains, all vallence and other the furniture of my chamber. I give to my Valentine, Mrs. Katherine Belson the little gold cross I wear about my neck and the table linen Mrs. Belson uses of mine. I give to Mr. Charles Jenings forty pounds in money and cloth to make him a mourning suit and cloak, and also my green velvet box which stands in his chamber with all things therein or which used to be kept in it. I give to Mr. John Jenings and Mr. Dampont five pounds apiece." There are bequests to servant⁵ and the residue to Augustine Belson who is made executor.⁵

Augustine Belson is probably a relative of Thomas Belson of Brill (Bucks.) who was executed for his faith at Oxford in 1589. Charles Jenings who received so much more than the others is probably his chaplain and it is not difficult to guess what was kept in the green velvet box.

Henry Lord Vaux held the title two years and died on 20 September, 1663. He had made his will on 11 September, 1661, before he had learnt that he had succeeded to the title. He left everything to his "loving friends, Captain Thomas Bedingfield of Chislingham (Suffolk) and Catherine Tyrell of Eye, widow." Captain Bedingfield had served with him in Flanders.

On 19 September, 1663, the eve of his death, he added a codicil beginning : "The will of my Lord Henry Vaux" leaving among other small bequests, £100 to his sister Mrs. Joyce Vaux, and £10 to the poor of Eye.⁵⁶

He lies under a plain stone slab in the chancel of the church there, with the simple inscription :

EXIIT ULTIMUS BARONII DE HARROWDEN
HENRICUS VAUX
SEPTEM 20 ANNO DMI MDCLXIII.

Above the inscription are the Vaux arms with the family motto : *Hodie et non cras*. When Henry died, as there was no male heir, the title went into abeyance.

Joyce was the last to die. She made a will on 3 October, 1666 leaving everything to John Bolt of Eye.⁵⁷ The Parish Registers there record all that is known of her life in England :

“Anno Domini 1667. Madame Vaux buried May 16th.”,

Nicholas Earl of Banbury sat once in Parliament as a peer but not without protest. For the next Parliament he received no writ of summons, and long litigation followed, and continued until his death at Boughton on 14 March, 1674, when his son Charles, baptized at Boughton on 3 June, 1662, as “Viscount Wallingford,” took up the fight. In 1685 he petitioned the King, but without success. In 1692 he killed his brother-in-law Captain Philip Lawson in a duel and was indicted for murder. His claim to be tried by his peers was rejected. When arraigned as Charles Knollys he pleaded a misnomer and in 1694 the indictment was quashed. The claim has been put forward by his descendants more than once, the last occasion being in 1813, when the House of Lords decided that the petitioner “was not entitled to the title etc. of Earl of Banbury.”

Before taking leave of Harrowden we may visit the two churches where the Vauxes were interred and see what they were like after a hundred years of Protestant rule. This survey was made in 1637.

“HARROWDEN MAGNA. The chancel walls in some places want pointing, the windows glazing, and the door mending. And it wants also sentences of scripture, for the doing of which the Visitors have given time until the Court before Christmas then to be certified. The Vestry want plastering, whiting, and paving, and the windows want both mending and glazing. The ground work also and the roof very defective. There wants a new Communion table board. There are certain seats in the church want boarding. Three windows on the south side and one on the north side of the church stopped up in part. There wants a channel of conveyance on the south side of the church, for want of which the water many times doth flow therein, unto the great annoyance of the same. The outward door of the belfry all

broken, so much that there wants a new one. The whole church wants whiting and beautifying. The church porch wants plastering and paving. The churchyard wall on the north next the street, and on the corner of the south wants repairing. Two several times in the year they bring straw into the church, which doth annoy the same, and is very undecent.

"IRTHLINGBOROUGH ST. PETERS. The roof and leads of the church and chancel are in such decay as it rains in divers places. The east and south windows of the chancel are partly stopped up. The seats of the church are partly broken, and some of them underset with stones . . . There are certain monuments in the south aisle against the chancel most miserably defaced and abused, which ought to be repaired and decently kept. [*marginal note*: South aisle to the Lord Vaux belonging.] . . . The south aisle against the chancel wants whiting and plastering in divers places, and is ready to fall as before mentioned. There are certain ruinous walls which were part of the old College adjoining to the most part of the church, betwixt the church and the steeple, which are a great disfiguring to the church except they be covered or at least built up with a decent top or coping of stone answerable to the rest of the church. There are divers sheds and hollows or vaults underground in which poor people inhabit, within the churchyard and adjacent to the church, to the great profanation of the holy ground. The churchyard is profaned with dung and rubbish and other noisome filth . . . There is a motto or sentence abusive to the name of him who sits in the south aisle, [William Lord Vaux?]. The abuse was set over his head, at which divers beholders have been scandalized and offended, which was done by the presumption of John Milton the painter, contrary to the monition of Mr. Bletsoe the minister there."⁵⁸

Rushton Hall should have been forfeited to the crown upon the attainder of Francis Tresham in 1605, but it was found to have been settled on the second son Lewis. He sold it to Brian Cokayne, Viscount Cullen, who viewed papists with profound suspicion. It is he who gives us our last glimpse of old Harrowden Hall, in an undated letter (probably September, 1666),

addressed to Joseph Williamson Esq., keeper of the royal papers at the Lord Arlington's :

"I received yours by the post this last night and shall observe all his Majesty's commands with all possible care and diligence. Pray let me know whether you have any suspicion of any papists having any private designs, for here are several rumours to that purpose, but I suppose they are all fables. Only I desire you will communicate this to my Lord Peterborough that I am informed that at the house of the Lord Banbury's in a town called Haraden, near me, wherein an ancient Lady (being a Catholic and his Lordship's aunt) doth dwell, are divers persons concealed : and that for many nights together they have been seen to go out by fives and sixes on horseback, all of them with portmantles and armed, and so to return before day. And it has been farther observed that they have given the town watch two and three shillings at a time to go drink at the alehouse, to hinder their taking notice of their goings out and comings in, as it is supposed. I shall only see what more I can learn of this, but shall do nothing farther till I receive orders from his Lordship and yourself, because the Lady is so near a relation to his Lordship for whom I have all the duty and respect imaginable.

Yours for ever, Qullen.

"I forgot to tell you that they buy store of provisions, but buy them not at the next market but at markets farther off."⁶⁰

Lord Peterborough had four aunts on his father's side, Elizabeth, Frances, Margaret and Anne. A list of recusants of about 1680 gives under Harrowden Magna "Domina Mordant indicted at the Sessions" and under Isham, "Margaret Mordant indicted at the Sessions."⁶¹ Perhaps they are one and the same person. Lord Cullen, unfortunately, does not give us any hint what these mysterious riders of the night carried away from Harrowden. Perhaps it was the muniments, which have completely disappeared.

In 1694, Charles Knollys, 2nd Earl of Banbury, sold Harrowden Hall to Thomas Watson-Wentworth, a younger son of Lord Rockingham of Rockingham Castle. The new owner practically rebuilt the house some time before 1719. It is probable however, that the north wing is substantially as he found it, and there is

still to be seen a hiding hole, craftily ventilated, that may have been the work of Blessed Nicholas Owen. But that is all there is now to remind us of the great old house of a thousand stirring memories. The cedar that would not bow to the storm had fallen at last to the axe.

Thus yields the Cedar to the axe's edge,
Whose arms gave shelter to the Princely Eagle,
Under whose shade the Ramping Lion slept,
Whose top-branch overpeer'd Jove's spreading tree,
And kept low shrubs from Winter's Powerful Wind.

EPILOGUE

IN December, 1666, when the old city of London was a mass of charred ruins, and Joyce Vaux, the last of the family, was preparing for death, the over-conscientious Lord Cullen wrote from Sir Thomas Tresham's old Catholic home another letter to Joseph Williamson :

"I did lately receive an order to search for arms in all popish recusants' houses. The order I sent to some deputies to do the like, but I assure you I think we shall have little to do, for I know not of above two or three in our county. But in order to his Majesty's commands I did search my neighbour Mr. Pulton's house [at Desborough] but found no more than two birding guns and an old sword, besides the arms which he finds for his share of the militia, which I left him. But the two guns, if you think fit, I will restore him, as being of no danger, but of pleasure to him that loves shooting fowls.

"I also found in the house of two day-labourers in the same town two birding guns which I intend if you approve of it to return them. Pray let me know if I must go search the Lord Cardigan's house, he being a peer."¹

I quote this letter not to show the absurd lengths to which the no-popery scare was driving the over-zealous, but as a picture of the almost complete extinction of popery in the county. Lord Cullen names the two great families that carried on the Faith for a little longer.

"The Pultons," says Bridges, "appear to have been Roman Catholics."² They do, indeed. One generation alone produced twelve priests (including six brothers Jesuits), and several nuns, and their story would require another book. The Brudenells at Deene, Lord Cardigan's family, persevered for another generation, but all the other notable recusant families seem to have succumbed. Cullen's estimate of "two or three" must apply only to those houses worth searching. A list of papists³ drawn up ten years later gives the total for the diocese of Peterborough as 163 out of a population of nearly 96,000. 61 of these were in

Rutland, leaving just over a hundred in Northamptonshire. Of these 30 were at Deene, 19 at Welford, while ten still clung to their Faith at Harrowden. But there was now no Cedar to keep these low shrubs from winter's powerful wind, and they soon dwindled away. There was one papist at Irthlingborough, the only one in the whole deanery of Higham Ferrers. Doubtless these figures are an underestimate, but they do seem to show the only three live centres of resistance that survived the Commonwealth.

Ahead of the exhausted and impoverished Catholics, who had borne continuous oppression for a hundred and thirty years, lay the Armageddon of the Oates Plot (1678-81), which was to claim as many victims as the whole previous fifty years. After that the long stream of innocent blood ceased to flow. Apart from the hundreds executed after various rebellions, 360 victims had been put to death whose only offence was their religion. No estimate can be attempted of the numbers that languished in filthy prisons, or who were ground to dust by the recusant fines. Even after the executions the penal laws remained on the Statute Book, in all their rigour, for another ninety years, and many remained till 1829. Priests died in prison as late as 1730, though by then the laws were enforced only spasmodically. If there is little to record of persecution in Northamptonshire during the last hundred years of the penal times it is partly due to this lack of rigour, but more perhaps to the fact that there remained scarcely any Catholics to persecute.

Of Sir Thomas Tresham's large family, Francis died in the Tower; two sons named Thomas died in infancy; a third Thomas died in 1612.⁴ Catherine married Sir John Webb, and was killed with more than ninety other Catholics when the old London Blackfriars collapsed during a sermon in 1623.⁵ Elizabeth married Lord Monteagle, who was given the credit of revealing the Gunpowder Plot. Mary married Sir Thomas Brudenell of Deene, and there they kept the Faith alive for another hundred years. Lewis Tresham, the second son, succeeded to the property on the attainder of his brother, sold Rushton, and kept only Lyveden. He was created a baronet in 1611, and died in 1639.⁶ His son, William, died abroad also in 1639. His son, William, married Frances, daughter of Sir John Gage, and died without issue in 1650-1, when the baronetcy

became extinct.⁷ Frances was living at Lyveden, a Recusant, in 1644.⁸

The Tresham house at Lyveden, now denuded of its staircase, still stands. Higher up the hill, lovely even in its desolation, stands the "New Beild," Sir Thomas' exquisite profession of Faith, that Cromwell's soldiers tried in vain to efface.

A little over a hundred years ago Thomas Bell, an antiquary who lived at Barnwell, visited these ruins and there surprised a stranger.

"He was on his knees near the arch at the east end, or altar, and was so deeply intent upon his purpose as not to perceive my approach . . . He rose from his knees without any confusion, and replacing what appeared to be a crucifix in his bosom, listened very complacently to my apologies . . . 'If this had happened,' he said with a smile, 'some few years back, it might have made me an inmate of your county prison ; but thanks to Him,' he continued (at the same time crossing himself devoutly), 'times are altered, the passions of men are hushed, and the poor Catholic may worship his God in security and peace.' We proceeded, at the stranger's particular wish, to the Old Building, as it is called, about a quarter of a mile distant, the ancient mansion of the family of Tresham. I accompanied him through every room, even to the very attics of the building, and listened with the greatest attention to his remarks, as he pointed out various objects before him—the staircase with its nine landings not being forgotten . . . Not till we ascended the terrace, which bounds the old garden, did it strike me that I was perhaps in conversation with one who was in some way connected with the subject that engrossed our attention . . . Something however which here escaped him induced me to ask if he were of the family with whom he seemed so perfectly acquainted. He immediately, without answering the question, changed the conversation, and though his gentlemanly bearing towards me never altered, he became more reserved, and particularly so on the very point to which I wished to draw his attention, for my fancy had already painted him as a Tresham . . . I was exceedingly anxious to ask him a few questions concerning the building, but on a sudden he became taciturn and thoughtful, and went again into the

interior, where he remained nearly a quarter of an hour, and where the reader may be assured I had too much respect for his sorrows to follow him. I say "sorrows" for I saw a tear cross his cheek as he entered the building, which had now acquired a tenfold interest in my breast."

Later they dined together at Oundle.

"He indeed once during the evening, and on a sudden, recurred to Lyveden, and asked me if I had ever heard of an offer being made to purchase the building and restore it to its original purpose of monastic seclusion. I answered in the negative, when he relapsed into another fit of musing, and after a few minutes, as if speaking to himself, said softly: 'And why not? 'Tis not impossible yet. How very extraordinary it would be,' added he, laying his hand on my shoulder, 'if such an event should come to pass?' 'And by a Tresham too?' I continued. I was afraid I had gone too far, for he started, and gave me a look I shall never forget. His composure, however, soon returned, but I could see it was an effort, and it gave me much pain to think I had occasioned it . . . I have never seen him since."⁹

George Brudenell 3rd. of Cardigan conformed in 1708, but popish priests still laboured at Deene for another decade. Two are buried in the churchyard, Mr. Nicholas Biggs in 1714, and Mr. Benet Williams in 1718. The Pultons continued to support a priest at Desborough till 1730 at least, but the little flock at Welford is never heard of again. One by one the lights went out, as the older folk died, and the younger lost their faith through lack of opportunity to practise it.

But there was one new centre that began on the borders of Oxfordshire, when a Mr. George Holman became a Catholic. His wife was Lady Anastasia, daughter of the martyred Viscount Stafford, and they lived at Warkworth near Banbury. He died in 1698, and his widow carried on a very popish house. It was here that a boy of thirteen, son of her housekeeper, was received into the Church. He was destined, more than any other individual, to fan the dying embers of Catholicism into a flame. He was Richard Challoner whose body has been so recently translated to Westminster Cathedral. But before Challoner was

ready to begin his courageous task, in the darkest hour before the dawn, the Catholics in Northamptonshire were virtually extinct. Warkworth remained the only known Catholic Mass-centre till 1780 when a poor little shed, up a step ladder, behind the *Golden Ball* at Kingscliffe was opened to provide for a handful of Catholics, later augmented by Irish immigrants driven to England by famine.

The backbone of this little mission was a family named Carrington. Anne Carrington stood sponsor at most of the baptisms from 1809 till 1847, and was probably the priest's housekeeper.¹⁰ There was an Athanasius Carrington, a recusant, among the servants at Harrowden in 1597,¹¹ and another Athanasius Carrington at Kingscliffe in 1723,¹² so it would seem that this humble Harrowden family has the distinction of being the only family constantly resident in the county, that clung to their faith from Elizabeth to Victoria.

This little shed, with the roof so low that the priest who laboured here for fifty years never stood erect in it, was all that remained of the Catholic Church in the county, and there it still stands. The contrast between this humble building and Burghley's great house at nearby Stamford is the measure of the triumph of the Cecils, father and son; of the father who ground the old Church to powder, and the son who instilled an enduring hatred of it in the hearts of the English people.

In 1850 Northamptonshire was incorporated in the present huge diocese of Northampton (comprising seven counties), that Cardinal Manning called the "Dead See." As late as 1867, its bishop could write :

"I cannot tell you what pleasure it would give me to be able to introduce him [a Mr. Macdonnell] to any Catholic families in the neighbourhood, as this supposes the existence of such phenomena in Northamptonshire; but the longest sighted telescope and largest double-million magnifying microscope would be at fault in trying to discover *one* ! The only Catholics who have property in the county are Frank Tirville and Mr. Plowden, the latter of whom comes at rare intervals to shoot a few partridges, and vanishes with the smoke of his own gun. The former, as I daresay you know, has a small property at Rothwell, commonly called Roweale,

which probably he has never seen. [He was in Sydney] . . . I feel rather like St. Simon Stylites."¹³

Throughout most of these two depressing centuries the Vaux family had lost all contact with Northamptonshire and the title remained in abeyance between the heirs of Mary and Catherine, the sisters of the last Lord Vaux. Mary who married Sir George Simeon, died about 1622 leaving an only surviving daughter Elizabeth. Catherine, who married Henry Neville, Lord Abergavenny, died on 5 July, 1649, leaving a son John and a daughter. From Mary the elder daughter, through the Butlers of Ballyraggett and the Brown Mostyns, the claim to the title was handed down, together with the old faith.

On 13 March, 1838, Queen Victoria was pleased to terminate the abeyance in favour of George Charles Mostyn, who thus became sixth Baron Vaux of Harrowden. He was succeeded by his grandson, Hubert George Charles, the 7th Baron, in 1883.

In 1893 he purchased the ancient family estate of Harrowden, and in 1905 he built a chapel as a memorial to his first wife. Thus the Vaux family and the Mass returned to Harrowden after a break of more than two hundred years.

Hubert, 7th Baron Vaux died on 25 October, 1935. On his death the barony once more fell into abeyance between his three daughters, but was called out on 12 July, 1938, in favour of the eldest daughter, Grace Mary Eleanor, who is the present holder of the title.

Hubert lies buried in the chapel that he built, under a brass that is only a few yards from the brass with which this story began. But between these two brasses lie five hundred momentous years. William Harrowden, in his medieval armour, may seem to have little in common with Hubert Lord Vaux, diplomatist and company-director, but joining them through the ages, in defiance of all that cunning and cruelty could devise to sever it, runs the golden thread of an undying and unconquerable Faith.

FINIS.

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APPENDIX A

VAUX GENEALOGY

The Family of Nicholas 1st Baron Vaux (d. 14 May, 1523)¹. He married first (1483-6)² Elizabeth, dau. and heir of Henry Lord Fitzhugh, and widow of Sir Will. Parr. She was alive in Oct. 1501.³ They had issue

1. Alice, who married (1501)⁴ Sir Rich. Sapcote of Elton (Hunts.) and died 1543.⁵
2. Anne, who married (1501)⁶ Sir Thos. Lestrangle of Hunstanton (Norfolk).
3. Catherine, who married Sir George Throckmorton of Coughton (Warw.), and died 1571.⁷

He married secondly (1507)⁸ Anne, dau. and co-heir of Thos. Green of Green's Norton (Northants.). She was born c. 1490,⁹ and died before 1523.¹⁰ They had issue

1. Thomas, 2nd Baron Vaux, born 25 April 1509,¹¹ q.v.
2. William, living in May 1523.¹²
3. Margaret, who married Sir Francis Poultney of Misterton (Leics.).¹³
4. Maud, who married Sir John Fermor of Easton Neston (Northants.), and died 14 April 1569.¹⁴
5. Bridget, who married (before 1538)¹⁵ Maurice Walsh of Sudbury (Glos.).

The Family of Thomas 2nd Baron Vaux (d. Oct. 1556).¹⁶ He married (before 1523)¹⁷ Elizabeth, dau. and heir of Thomas

- ¹ V. Peerage, p. 17.
- ² Parr was living in 1483.
- ³ B. M. Harl. 69, no. 25.
- ⁴ Cal. IPM. Hen. VI, II, no. 406.
- ⁵ Lincoln Pedigrees (Harl. Soc.), p. 853.
- ⁶ Wards. 9/306, p. 89.
- ⁷ Brass in Coughton Church.
- ^{8 9 10} Baker, I, 32.
- ¹¹ V. Peerage, p. 17.
- ¹² Wards. 9/306, p. 301.
- ¹³ Chancy, *Hist. Antiq. of Herts.*, II, 450.
- ¹⁴ Baker, II, 143.
- ¹⁵ SP. 1/135, p. 255.
- ¹⁶ Machyn's Diary, p. 115.
- ¹⁷ Wards 9/306, p. 310.

Cheney of Irthlingborough (Northants.). She was born 1505¹ and died 20 Nov. 1556.²

They had issue

1. Maud, married Anthony Burrows of Burrow-on-the-Hill (Leics.) and died c. 1581.³
2. William, 3rd Baron Vaux, b. Aug. 1535⁴ q.v.
3. Nicholas, living 1564,⁵ married Joan ———⁶
4. Anne b. 1542,⁷ married Reginald Bray of Stean and Hinton (Warw.) and died 7 May 1619.⁸
5. Catherine.

The Family of William 3rd Baron Vaux (d. 20 Aug. 1595).⁹ He married first (before 18 March 1557)¹⁰ Elizabeth dau. of John Beaumont of Grace Dieu (Leics.). She was buried 12 Aug. 1562.¹¹

They had issue

1. Henry. died unmarried No. 1587.¹²
2. Eleanor, married (c. 1577)¹³ Edward Brooksby of Shoby (Leics.) and died c. 1625.¹⁴
3. Elizabeth, a Poor Clare.
4. Anne, bapt. 19 July 1562.¹⁵

He married secondly (1563-4), Mary dau. of John Tresham of Rushton (Northants.). She died 28 Dec. 1597.¹⁶

They had issue

1. George, bapt. 27 Sept. 1564.¹⁷ q.v.
2. Catherine bapt. 25 Feb. 1566.¹⁸ died prob. ante 1597.¹⁹

¹ Baker I, 714.

² I.P.M. in Vaux Peerage, p. 36.

³ Troubles Ser. I, p. 152.

⁴ S.P. 1/98, fol. 96.

⁵ St. Ch. 5. N 17/6. dead before Feb. 1583. C. 54/1172.

⁶ C 54/1172.

⁷ Monum. in Hinton Church. (Bridges I 177).

⁸ ib.

⁹ I.P.M. Vaux Peerage, p. 39.

¹⁰ C. 54/650 m. 74.

¹¹ Par. Reg. Irthlingborough.

¹² V. Peerage, p. 203. Par. Reg. Gt. Ashby (Leics.).

¹³ Rush. Pap., p. 80.

¹⁴ Foley V, p. 599.

¹⁵ Par. Reg. Irthlingborough.

¹⁶ V. Peerage, p. 203.

¹⁷ Par. Reg. Harrowden. (B.M. Lansd. 991, fol. 180).

¹⁸ ib.

¹⁹ Not mentioned in her mother's will.

3. Muriel bapt. 26 Jan. 1570.¹ Married (before Sept. 1597)² George Fulshurst.
4. Edward, died unmarried 25 July 1585.³
5. Ambrose b. July 1570⁴ married (April 1612)⁵ Elizabeth Wyborne, widow. Died 25 April 1626.⁶

The Family of George Vaux (d. 13 July 1594)⁷

He married (25 July 1585)⁸ Elizabeth, dau. of Sir John Roper of Linstead (Kent).

They had issue

1. Mary b. 1587? mar. (1604)⁹ Sir George Simeon of Baldwin Brightwell (Oxon.). She died before 1624.¹⁰
2. Edward 4th Baron Vaux b. 13 Sept. 1588.¹¹ d. 8 Sept. 1661.¹²
3. William b. 1590¹³ d. ante 1661.¹⁴
4. Henry b. 1591¹⁵ d. 20 Sept. 1663.¹⁶
5. Joyce. A "Mary Ward" nun. buried 16 May 1667.¹⁷
6. Catherine b. 1593-4. Married (c. 1614)¹⁸ Henry Nevill, Lord Abergavenny. He was bur. 24 Dec. 1641.¹⁸ She was bur. 7 July 1649.¹⁸

¹ Par. Reg. Irthlingborough. But C3/251/92 and C3 Eliz. U1/51 give her birthday as 2 Feb. 1570.

² Called Fulshurst in her mother's will.

³ V. Peerage, p. 203.

⁴ Rush. Pap., p. 71.

⁵ St. Ch. 8 289/3.

⁶ Par. Reg. St. Mary le-Strand.

⁷ Par. Reg. Harrowden.

⁸ C 2 Eliz. U 2/12.

⁹ I.P.M. on Sir John Simeon. Vaux Peerage, p. 54.

¹⁰ Foley IV, 606.

¹¹ I.P.M. on William. Vaux Peerage, p. 39 and p. 203.

¹² Monument in Church at Dorking, now destroyed, in H. N. Nicolas *Treatise on Adulterine Bastardy*, p.294.

¹³ C.R.S. XXX, p. 275.

¹⁴ Since he did not succeed Edward.

¹⁵ C.R.S. XXXVII, p. 159.

¹⁶ Monument in Chancel at Eye.

¹⁷ Par. Reg. Eye (Suffolk).

¹⁸ Complete Peerage, under Abergavenny.

APPENDIX B.

THE POEMS OF THOMAS LORD VAUX

I. IN HIS EXTREAME SICKNESSE

What greeues my bones, and makes my body faint ?
What prickes my flesh and teares my head in twayne ?
Why doe I wake, when rest should me attaint ?
When others laugh, why do I live in payne ?
I tosse, I turne, I chaunge from side to side,
And stretch me oft, in Sorrowe's linkes betyde.

I tosse, as one betost in waues of care,
I turne, to flee the woes of lothsome life.
I change, to spy if Death this corpes might spare :
I stretch to heauen, to ridde me of this strife.
Thus do I stretch, and change, and tosse, and turne-
Whyle I in hope of heauen my life do burne.

Then hold thee still, let be thy heauiness,
Abolish care, forgeat thy pining woe :
For by this meanes shalt thou find redresse,
When oft betost, hence thou to heauen must goe.
Then tosse and turne, and tumble franke and free.
O happy thrise, when thou in heauen shalt be.

2. OF THE INSTABILITIE OF YOUTH

When I looke backe and in my selfe behold
The wandring wayes that youth could not descry :
And marke the fearful course that youth did hold,
[measure] And mette* in mind each steppe youth strayed a wry ;
My knees I bowe, and from my hart I call,
O Lord, forget these faultes and follies all !

For now I see how voyde youth is of skill :
I see also his prime time and his end ;
I doo confesse my faultes and all my ill,
And sorow sore for that I did offend ;
And with a mind repentant of all crimes,
Pardon I aske for youth, ten thousand times.

The humble hart hath daunted the proud mind
 Eke Wysedome hath given Ignorance a fall ;
 [what] And Wit hath taught that* Folly could not find,
 And age hath Youth her subiect and her thrall ;
 Therefore I pray, O Lord of life and truth,
 Pardon the faultes committed in my youth.

Thou that diddest graunt the wise King his request,
 Thou that in whale thy Prophet didst preserue,
 Thou that forgauest the wounding of Thy breast,
 [die] Thou that didst saue the thief in state to sterue* ;
 Thou onely God, the Giuer of all grace,
 Wipe out of mind the path of youths vaine race.

Thou that by power to life didst raise the dead,
 Thou that of grace restored'st the blind to sight,
 Thou that for loue thy life and loue out-bled,
 Thou that of fauour madest the lame go right,
 Thou that canst heall and helpe in all as sayes,
 Forgive the gilth that grewe in youthes vaine wayes.

And now, since I, with faith and doubtlesse mind,
 Do flye to thee with prayer to appease Thy yre,
 And since that Thee I onely seeke to finde,
 And hope by faith to attayne my iust desire ;
 Lord, mind no more youthes error and vnskill
 [enable] And able* Age to doo Thy holy will.

3. NO PLEASURE WITHOUT SOME PAINE

How can the tree but wast, and wither awaie
 That hath not sometyme comforte of the sunne ?
 How can that flower but fade, and sone decaie,
 That alwaies is with darcke clouds runne ?
 Is this a life ? naye death you maie it call,
 That feeles eche paine, and knoweth no ioye at all.

What foodlesse beast can liue long in good plight ?
 Or is it life, where sences there be none ?
 Or what availeth eyes without their light ?
 Or els a tongue to hym that is alone ?
 Is this a life ? naye death you maie it call,
 That feeles eche paine, and knowes no ioy at all.

Whereto serue eares, if that there be no sound ?
 Or such a head, where no deuise doeth growe :
 But all of plaints, since sorrowe is the grounde,
 Whereby the hearte doeth pine in deadlie woe.
 Is this a life ? naye death you maie it call,
 That feeles eche paine, and knowes no joy at all.

4. A LOVER DISDAINED COMPLAINETH

If euer man had Loue too deerely bought
 Lo I am he that plaies within her maze :
 And finds no waie, to get the same I sought,
 But as the Dere are driuen vnto the gaze.
 And to augment the grief of my desire
 My self to burne, I blowe the fire.
 But shall I come nye you ?
 Of force I must flie you.

What death alas, maie be compared to this,
 I praie within the maze of my sweete foe.
 And when I would of her but craue a kiss
 Disdaine enforceth her awhile to goe
 Myself I checke : yet doe I twiste the twine
 The pleasure hers, the paine is myne.
 But shall I come nye you ?
 Of force I must flie you.

You courtly wights, that want your pleasaunt choyse
 Sende me a flood of teares, to waile my chaunce :
 Happie are thei in Loue that can reioyce,
 To their greate paines, where Fortune doth aduance.
 But sith my sute alas, can not preuaill
 Full freight with care, in grief still will I waile :
 Sith you will nedes flie me,
 I maie not come nye thee.

5. OF A CONTENTED SPIRIT

When all is doon and saied, in the ende this shall you finde
 The moste of all doeth hath in blisse, that hath a quiet minde :
 And, cleare from worldly cares, to dreame can be content,
 The sweetest tyme in all this life, in thinkyng to bee spent.

The bodie subiect is to fickle Fortune's power,
 And to a million of mishapps is casuall every hour :
 And Death in tyme doeth chaunge it to a clodde of claie,
 Whereas the mynde, whiche is deuine, runnes never to decaie.

Companion none is like, vnto the mynde alone,
 For many have been harmde by speach; through thinking fewer
 none :
 Feare often tymes restraineth words, but make not thoughts to
 cease,
 And he speaks beste that hath the skill when for to holde his
 peace.

Our wealth leaues us at death; our kinsmen at the graue;
 But vertues of the mynde vnto the heauens with vs we haue :
 Wherefore for vertue's sake, I can be well content,
 The sweetest tyme of all my life, to deeme in thinkyng spent.

6. BETHINKING HYM SELF OF HIS ENDE, WRITETH THUS

When I beholde the baier,* my last a postyng horsse, [bier]
 That bare shall to the graue, my vile and carren corse,
 Then saie I seely wretche, why doth thou put thy trust
 In thyngs eithe made of claye, that sone will turne to duste.

Doest thou not see the young, the hardie and the faire,
 That now are past and gone, as though thei neuer were :
 Doest thou not see thy self, draw hourly to thy laste,
 As shafts the whiche are shotte at birds that flieth paste.

Doest thou not see how Death through smiteth with his launce,
 Some by warre, some by plague, and some with worldlie
 chaunce :
 What thyng is there on yearth, for pleasure that was made,
 But goeth more swift awaye, then doeth the Sommer shade.

See here the Sommer floure, that sprong this other daie,
 But Winter weareth as faste, and bloweth clean awaie :
 Euen so shalt thou consume, from youth to lothsome age,
 For death he doeth not spare, the prince more than the page.

Thy house shall be of claie, a clotte vnder thy hedde,
 Vntill the latter daie, the graue shall be thy bedde :
 Vntill the blowyng trumpe, doeth saie to all and some :
 Rise vp out of your graue, for now the Judge is come.

7. BEYNG IN SORROWE HE COMPLAINETH

Mistrust misdemes amisse, whereby displeasure growes,
 And time delaied finds frends afraid their faith for to disclose ;
 Suspect that breede the thought, and thoughts to sighes convarte,
 And sighs haue sought a floud of teares, wher sobbs do seke ye
 hart.

Thus harte that meanes no harme must feede on sorrowes all,
 Untill suche tyme as pleaseth the iudge the truth in question call ;
 Though cause of greate mistrust before that iudge appeare,
 My truthe, and mercie of my iudge I trust shall set me cleare.

Report these rimes at large my truthe for to detecte,
 Yet truthe in tyme shall trie itself, and driue awaie suspecte :
 Beleve not euery speache, nor speake not all you heare,
 For truthe and mercie of the iudge I trust shall set me clear.

8. THE ASSAULT OF CUPID UPON THE FORT WHERE THE
LOVER'S HART LAY WOUNDED, AND HOW HE WAS TAKEN

When Cupid scaled first the fort,
 Wherein my hart lay wounded sore,
 The battrie was of such a sorte
 That I must yeeld or die therefore.

There saw I Loue upon the wall,
 And he his banner did display ;
 Alarme, alarme, he 'gan to call,
 And bad his souldiers keepe aray.

The armes the which that Cupid beare,
 Were peirced harts, with teares besprent ;
 In siluer and sable to declare
 The stedfast loue he alwayes meant.

There might you see his hand all drest,
 In colours like to white and black,
 With poulder and with pellets prest,
 To bring them forth to spoile and sacke.

[ramparts] Good with the maister of the shot
 Stood in the Rampier*, braue and proude ;
 Expençe of poulder he spared not,
 Assault, assault to crie aloude.

There might you heare the Cannons rore,
 Ech peece discharged a Lover's looke,
 Which had the power to rent, and tore
 In any place where as they tooke.

And even with the trumpets sowne
 The scaling ladders were up set,
 And Beauty walken vp and downe,
 With bow in hand and arrowes whet.

Then first Desire began to skale
 And shrouded him under his targe,
 As one the worthiest of them all,
 And aptest for to giue the charge.

[arquebuse] The pushed souldiers with their pikes,
 And Holberds, with handy strokes,
 The Hargabush* in flesh it lights,
 And dimps the aire with mistie smokes.

And as is now souldiers vse,
 When shot and powder gins to want,
 I hanged vp my flag of truce.
 And pleaded for my liue's graunt.

[miserable] When Fanie thus had made her breach,
 And Beautyentred with her band,
 With bag and baggage, siely* wretch,
 I yeeld into Beautie's hand.

Then Beautie had to blow retreite
 And euerie souldier to retire,
 And Mercy mild, with speede to fet
 Me capitue, bound as prisoner.

Madam (quoth I) sith that this day,
 Had serued you at all assayes ;
 I yeeld to you without delay,
 Here of the Fortresse all the keyes ;

And sith that I haue bene the marke
 At whome you shot at with your eye,
 Needes must you with your handy warke
 Or salue my sore, or let me die.

9. A DYTTYPE OR SONET MADE BY THE LORDE VAUX IN TIME
OF THE NOBLE QUEENE MARYE REPRESENTINGE THE IMAGE
OF DEATHE

I loathe that I dyd loue
In youth that I thought sweete :
As tyme requyrith for my behoue
Mee thinkes theye are not mette.

My lustes they dooe mee leave,
My fancies all are fledde,
And tracte of tyme begyns to weve
Graye heares within my heade.

For Age with stealinge steppes
Hath claude mee with his cruch,
And lustye youth awaye hee leapes,
As there had byn none such.

My Muse doth not delight
Mee, as shee dyde before ;
My hande and penne are not in plyte
As they haue bene of yore.

For Reason me denyes,
All youthly ydle ryme
And day by day to me she cries :
Leaue off theise toyes betyme.

The wrinkles of my browe
The furrowes in my face
Sayth lympinge Age hath caught him nowe
Where youth must geue him place.

The harbenger of death,
To mee I see him ryde :
The cough, the coulde, the gaspinge breath
Doth bydde me to provyde.

A picke axe and a spade
And eke a wyndinge sheet,
A house of claye for to be made
For such a gest most meete.

Methinkes I heare the clarke,
That knylles the carefull bell,
And byds mee leave my wearye warke
Ere Nature me compell.

My keepers knitte the knott
That youth doth laughe to scorne,
Of mee that shal bee cleane forgote
As I had ne'er bene borne.

Thus must I lyfe geue uppe,
Whose badge I longe dyd weare :
To them I yealde the wanton cuppe
That better maye it beare.

Loe here the bare hedde scull
By whose bald signes I knowe
That stooping Age away shall pull
That youthfull yeares did sowe.

For Beawtye with her bande,
These crooked cares hath wrought,
And shipped me into the lande,
From whense I first was brought.

And you that byde behynde,
Haue ye none other truste :
As ye of claye weare made by kinde
So shall ye wast to duste.

10. OF THE MEANE ESTATE

The higher that the cedar tree, vnder the heauens doe growe,
The more in danger is the top, when sturdie winds gan blowe :
Who judges them in princely throne to be deuoide of hate,
Doth not yet knowe what heapes of ill lies hid in such estate :
Such dangers greate, such gripes of mine such toil do they sustaine
That oftentimes of God thei wishe to be vnkynged again.

For as the huge and mightie rockes with stand the ragyng seas,
So Kyngdoms in subiexion be, whereas dame Fortune please :
Of brittle ioye, of smilyng cheare, of honie mixt with gall,
Allotted is to euery Prince in freedom to be thrall :

What watches long, what stepps vnsure, what grefes and cares
 of minde,
 What bitter broiles, what endles toiles, to Kyngdoms be assigned.

The subiect them maie well compare with Prince of pleasant daies,
 Whose silent might bryngs quiet rest, whose might no storme
 bewraies :
 How much be we, then, bounde to God, who such provision
 makes,
 To laye our cares vpon the Prince, thus doth He for our sakes :
 To Him therefore let vs left vp our harts and praie amaine
 That euery Prince that He hath plast, maie long in quiet raigne.

II. UPON HIS WHITE HAIRS

These hairs of age are messengers
 Which bid me fast, repent, and pray ;
 They be of death the harbingers,
 That do prepare and dress the way ;
 Wherefore I joy that you may see
 Upon my head such hairs to be.

They be the lines that lead the length
 How far my race was for to run ;
 They say my youth is fled with strength,
 And how old age is well begun ;
 The which I feel, and you may see
 Upon my head such lines to be.

They be the strings of sober sound,
 Whose music is harmonical ;
 Their tunes declare a tune from ground
 I came, and how thereto I shall ;
 Wherefore I joy that you may see
 Upon my head such strings to be.

God grant that those that white hairs have
 No worse them take than I have meant,
 That after they be laid in grave,
 Their souls to joy, their lives well spent.
 God grant likewise that you may see
 Upon your heads such hairs to be.

12. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Doth sorrow fret thy soul? O doleful sprite!
 Doth pleasure feed thy heart? O blessed man!
 Hast thou been happy once? O heavy plight!
 Are thy mishaps forepast? O happy than!
 Or hast thou bliss in eld? O bliss too late!
 Or hast thou bliss in youth? O sweet estate!

APPENDIX C.

THE POEMS OF HENRY VAUX

The poems of Henry Vaux are preserved in a small manuscript volume, now in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. The first half contains poems by Robert Southwell, S.J. The last forty, closely-written pages are devoted to "Certain Poems of Mr. Henrie Vaux, sonne of the Lord Vaux." There are ten in English and three in Latin. Two were written at thirteen, and one at seventeen, but they all exhibit a youthful immaturity and are probably the work of a boy. As their merit is merely relative, a selection only is given here. The complete list is as follows.

ENGLISH

1. A Complaint to the Nightingale, taken out of St. Bonaventure.
2. A Lamentation of a sinner.
3. Against Envie.
4. Of Friendship.
5. Of Covertise.
6. A Commendation of bloomes or blossoms.
7. No trust in Fortune. (aged 13).
8. Beautie is brittle.
9. Two Chores and an Epilogue added to the Tragedie of Agamemnon, translated out of Seneca.
10. Up drowzie muse. (unfinished).

LATIN

1. An Epilogue to Agamemnon. (aged 17).
2. *Meditatio de Passione Christi*. (aged 13).
3. Upon this theme, *Honos alit artes*, given him by Mr. Pembridge at Fawzeley, Sir Richard Knightley's house, in presence of the Knight, and Mr. Oxenbridge, and others, he made these verses *ex tempore*.

I. NO TRUST IN FORTUNE

Who so doth trust the fained chere
That smileth foorth by Fortunes lookes,
When good to him she doth appere,
To take his life she layeth her hookes.

The mariner is most unwise
 That trusteth to the quiet seas,
 For communely great stormes arise
 When as the windes do seme to ceasse.

Under the grass ful fresh and grene
 There lurketh hidde the hurtful snake ;
 Within the baite, as oft is sene,
 Doth lie the hoke the fish to take.

To Fortunes whele there is no trust ;
 For he that sittes in hiest place
 Within an houre lieth in the dust,
 If that she shew a froward face.

Thus Fortune turneth upside downe
 Mans life, and chaungeth each estate ;
 She makes the pore man weare a crowne,
 The mightie prince she doth abate.

The wise man onely scapeth free,
 Ne subiect is to Fortunes rage ;
 Though al estates her servauntes be,
 Yet can she not subdue the sage.

Anno aetatis 13

2. BEING SICKE IN OXFORD THUS HE PRAYED

With wayling voice from out the depth of sinne
 To thee, O Lord, I seely wretch do crie,
 Wherefore, O Lord, to heare me now beginne ;
 Though death approache, let not thy servant die ;
 And though my ship be turned upside-downe,
 In seas of sinne yet let me never drowne.

As Jonas cried within the fishes maw,
 Even so do I complaine now woeful wight ;
 As help from him thou didst not qwite withdraw,
 So let me find some mercie in thy sight ;
 And as thou cast him safe upon the land,
 So out of sinne Lord pul me with thy hand.

THE SONG OF THE LARK

The lark is not a bird
That sings in the open air
It sings in the heart of the earth
And its song is the song of the heart

It sings in the heart of the earth
And its song is the song of the heart
It sings in the heart of the earth
And its song is the song of the heart

It sings in the heart of the earth
And its song is the song of the heart
It sings in the heart of the earth
And its song is the song of the heart

It sings in the heart of the earth
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The lark is not a bird
That sings in the open air
It sings in the heart of the earth
And its song is the song of the heart

It sings in the heart of the earth
And its song is the song of the heart
It sings in the heart of the earth
And its song is the song of the heart

And as thou sav'dst thy Prophet in the cave
 From greedie lions thirsting for their pray,
 So from the Ramping Lion thou me save,
 Which goeth about the selie soules to slaye :
 Though death and daunger close me round about,
 Yet know I Lord that thou canst bring me out.

Wherefore, O Lord, to thee I make my prayer ;
 Thou Lord of Lordes vouchesafe to heare my voice ;
 Unto my griefes bowe downe thy piteous eare ;
 Though now I mourne, yet cause me to reioyce :
 And grant me Lord to passe these seas of strife,
 That I may come into the porte of Life.

3. A DESCRIPTION OF LOVE

The ancient Poetes meaning to declare
 That lovers thoughtes can never cloaked be,
 Did faine that Cupide was of garmentes bare ;
 And said that he was blind and could not see,
 Bicause who so is catch't within his snare
 Is blind of sense, and seeth not his share ;
 They fained also that he was a boye,
 To shew that Love is but a folish toye.

They said moreover he had winges to flie,
 To shew the lightnes of these Lovers thoughtes ;
 Which in vaine hope doth mounte sometimes on hie,
 But in an houre it goeth unto nought :
 Now may these Lovers, if they list, espie
 How good a God this is for whom they crie.
 Truely I marveile not though they have joy
 To serve a blinded flying naked boy.

He that the paines of folish Lovers sees,
 How some do die through languor paine and woe ;
 And how sometimes they hang them selves on trees,
 And of a Lover oft becomes a foe ;
 And marketh how their senses they do lose,
 And how they burne, and sone againe do freese ;
 May say Love is a goodly Lord to serve,
 That letteth so his faithful servantes sterve.

Loe Phyllis breath is stopped with a corde,
 Loe Iphis hangeth her upon a beame,
 Loe Didoes hart is pearced with a sworde,
 Behold Leander drowned in the streame ;
 Loe thus they fare that sitte at Cupides bourde
 This is your fee, thus payeth you your Lord ;
 Thus is your faithful service spent in vaine,
 Sith your reward is nothing els but paine.

What doth the name of Cupide signifie ?
 Untamed lust, and burning hote desire;
 Frend of al vices, vertues enemye ;
 Unto the witte a frost, to will a fire ;
 Them that him serve, God let them, never thee ;
 I think soch God in heven cannot be ;
 But rather he an Angel is, that fel
 With Lucifer from heven unto hel.

This God did teache Duke Jasons wife to flea
 Her little children with her propre handes ;
 Great beastlines he taught Pasiphaë,
 And Scylla to betray her fathers landes.
 What should I say of wicked Canace,
 Of Myrrha, Byblis, and Nyctimene ?
 For love Alcides left his lions skinne,
 And was content with Omphale to spinne.

Loe here the blindnesse of Dame Venus sonne,
 Loe here his winges, loe here his bare aray ;
 By serving him loe what at last is wanne ;
 Loe how he maketh folke to go astray.
 But to conclude, who so wold Cupide shunne,
 With Diane through the mountaines he must runne,
 Or go with Pallas to the fieldes to fight,
 Or go unto the Muses fountain bright.

4. OF FRENDSHIP

The sacred bandes of faithful frendshippes lawes
 Are broake by force, and sundred al in twaine ;
 The perfect love whom noble vertue drawes,
 The constant faith which wonted to remaine
 With stedefast trouth more firme then oath or vowe,
 In mind of men can scarcely harbour now.

When bright Astraea went to starrie skies,
When peace was fled, and pittie plac'd above,
When shining trouth was hidde from mortal eies,
Yet stil remain'd this faithful frendly love :
But if this blisful concord were not left,
Al earthly hope and ioy were from us reft.

Some kind of men inflamed with desire
By name of frendship cloake their filthie lus ;
Some wil be frendes, but not without their hiret;
And some conceale their treason under trust ;
Yet seld is sene inclos'd in mortal brest
For vertues sake a frendly love to rest.

Foule is the mind where wicked lust doth raigne,
And sekes a vaile to hide an ill intent ;
And wicked he whose frendship gapes for gaine,
Whose greedie brest to ravine al is bent ;
But he most cursed wrech that doth assay
By painted shew to worke his frendes decay.

O happie wight that doth enioy a frend,
Whose stedfast trouth in peril wil not faile ;
Whose constant love endureth to his end,
Against whose mind no fortune can prevaile ;
Approved long in pore estate, in wealth,
In ioy, in woe, in sickenes, and in health.

Then happie Theseus with his noble feere,
And thou Orestes wandring al about,
And thou to whom thy Daemon was so dere,
Whose fixed friendshippes never came in doubt ;
Oh what it is to have a frend so kind
A iewel rare, a treasure hard to find.

And yet, alas, ful many a man we know,
Whom fortune drawes, wil beare a frendly chere,
While lucke doth serve, and prosperous wind doth blowe ;
As swallowes swifte in springtime do appere ;
When stormes arise farewell, they wilbe gone,
They leave him al to sinke or swimme alone.

5. OF COVERTISE

On earth great stoare of gold unsought was found
 When Saturne reigned as a God of might ;
 Until his Sonne it hidde within the ground,
 Bicause that men for it began to fight.
 Yet now sith it is knowen to every wight
 That gold within the earth doth lie by kind,
 Men go to hel this treasure bright to find.

For gold men sel their children and their wives
 Their derest frendes, their good renowne and al ;
 For gold men are content to lose their lives ;
 For gold the freman doth become a thral ;
 For gold the Prince is murd'red in his hal ;
 For love of gold, as communely we see,
 A wicked acte wil sone attempted be.

Who so hath gold may have his whole desire ;
 For what thing is not done in hope of gain ?
 Or what is done without reward or hire ?
 Gold maketh men to labour and to paine ;
 Gold raiseth warre, and bieth peace againe ;
 Gold maketh frendes, and causeth mortal hate ;
 It ceaseth strife, and stirreth up debate.

Men have no cause Agenor for to curse,
 Which found the mines of gold, as some men say ;
 What if that some mens God be in their purse,
 Shold therefore men throw gold into the sea
 As Crates did ? or cast it clean away ?
 Sith God it gave, men shold it not refuse,
 Although the wicked wickedly it use.

6. A COMMENDATION OF BLOOMES OR BLOSSOMES

When Memnons woful mother with her tears,
 And Zephyrus do make the floures to grow ;
 When birdes do make their songes upon the breres ;
 Then on the trees the blossomes faire do show :
 Which I may wel preferre above the rest
 Of flowers, or compare them with the best.

Al other flowers ful low on earth abide,
 The blossome dwelleth nerer to the skie ;
 And in the grasse her self she doth not hide,
 But to the sight advaunced is on hie :
 Some other floures purple, yelow and green,
 In blossomes none but white and red are sene.

White is good life, and redde is honest shame ;
 These simple coloures are the best of al ;
 Yet bloomes perhappes of some men shal have blame,
 Bicause unto the ground so some they fal ;
 Sith that each Worldly thing doth fade away,
 It is no marvaile though that bloomes decay.

When Phoebus beames do parch the earth with heate ;
 When Pole Antarticke hath no day, but night ;
 When in this Zone our shadowes be not great ;
 When Articke Pole hath gotten perfect light ;
 Then al the floures do wither, as we see,
 And then the blossome falleth from the tree.

Yet though the blossomes fal from trees by kind,
 Bicause Apollo shold them never burne ;
 When bloomes be gone their fruite remaines behind,
 Where others into dust and poudre turne :
 Thus for their place, their colour, fruite, and smel,
 The bloomes of right may beare away the bell.

7. MEDITATIO DE PASSIONE CHRISTI

Supplicium Domini referens, caedemque nefandam,
 Lugentem Phoebum, maerentia sydera coeli,
 Rectorem mundi supplex orabo potentem,
 Ut clemens primo velit aspirare labori.
 Qui princeps vitae crudeli caede peremptus
 Horrida terrificae dirupit vincula mortis,
 Cur mortem subiit divina stirpe creatus ?
 Hinc fluit omne nefas, hinc orta est ferrea proles,
 Hinc dolus, hinc fraudes, hinc perdens omnia luxus,
 Hinc furor, impietas, et idolum cultus inanis.
 At genus humanum celsa respexit ab arce
 Ille Parens rerum qui sydera summa gubernat . . .
 Affixusque cruci rigidae sublimis in altum
 Tollitur (horrendum dictu, miserabile visu)

Confixosque pedes, extensaque brachia gestans
 Purpureo claros deturpat sanguine vultus . . .
 Tandem post varias poenas, post mille dolores
 Expirans Christus, Cur me nunc deseris, inquit,
 Mi pater? hanc animam Deus O Deus accipe fessam.
 Talia clamanti de corpore spiritus exit.
 Tunc miles totis contortam viribus hastam
 In latus infligens costas et pectora ferro,
 Candida traiecit, mixto fluit unda cruore.
 Sicque Dei Natus peccato mundus ab omni
 Immundum fuso purgavit sanguine mundum.
 Sic auctor vitae mortem moriendo subegit.
 Interea densis involvunt cuncta tenebris
 Horrendae nubes; terrae nox incubat atra.
 Ipse caput medio Titan dum ferret Olympo
 (Cynthia completo fratrem cum redderet orbe)
 Maerentes vultus obscura nube recondit;
 Pallida Luna fugit Christi miserata dolores;
 Nec solitam praebent maerentia sydera lucem.
 Iam non vult mundus Domino pereunte manere;
 Intremat horribili tellus quassata tumultu;
 Iamque cadunt urbes, procumbunt atria regum,
 Et celsae turres, et pontes marmore structi.
 Apparent dirae facies, et visa per umbras
 Busta sepulcorum ruptis exire sepulchris.
 At Sapiens quidam, cum talia monstra videret,
 Aut, ait, in nihilum iamiam labentibus annis
 Languida convexi solvetur machina mundi;
 Aut Deus omnipotens subit atrae spicula mortis,
 Qui mare, qui terras, qui sydera summa creavit . . .

Anno aetatis suae 13.

APPENDIX D

INVENTORY OF CHURCH GOODS AT MOULTON

The Inventory of the church goods of Moulton made the 15 day of September . . . [1551], by us William Cockes vicar there, John Lyne and Richard Fisher churchwardens, signed with our hands at Northampton the day and year aforesaid.

Primo. A vestment of green velvet with a cross of tissue and garnished with flowers, with all things pertaining thereto.

Item A vestment of red velvet with a cross of green velvet with all things pertaining thereto.

Item A cope of blue velvet with a face of red velvet garnished with branches.

Item A whole suit of green silk, both cope, vestment, tunicles, albs and all things belonging thereto.

Item A suit of blue silk with green flowers with tunicles, albs, and all things thereto, but no cope.

Item A vestment of white branched damask with a cross of red branched damask and images therein.

Item An old cope of dark silk.

Item A vestment of yellow silk with bars.

Item A vestment of yellow silk with blue cross.

Item A vestment of crule with divers colours.

Item A vestment of white satin with the alb, amice, stole and panel thereto.

Item Three old vestments, two of crule and one of old silk with a cross of crule.

Item A hanging for the front of the altar of yellow satin and crule.

Item Three "corporesse" [corporal] cases with three corporesses, one case of cloth of tissue, and another of blue velvet, and another of red silk with flowers.

Item An alb with the parcels.

Item One altar cloth of flaxen, in length 4 yards.

Item An altar cloth of diaper in length 2 yards and a half.

Item An altar cloth of flaxen in length 2 yards and a half.

Item An altar cloth of flaxen of length 2 yards.

Item A sheet of flaxen 2 yards in length and 2 in breadth.

Item A towel of diaper in length 5 yards.

Item A towel of flaxen in length 4 yards.

Item One chalice weighing 8 ounces.

Memoranda. One chalice sold by the common assent of the

parish for 57/-, which money was employed towards the furnishing of one soldier for all things belonging unto him, which was so sold two years before the making of the former Inventories.

Item 4 bells and a Sanctus bell.

Item One other great bell hanging in one frame by itself bought by Thomas Colles and Thomas Lucke, and by the consent of the whole parish for these causes following: that is to say, to be the clockbell, and to have it rung when any casualty shall chance, and for the gathering together of the inhabitants of the said town to the court and other their necessities, and not given to the said church.

Memoranda one old blue silk vestment with an alb was stolen forth of the church but by whom we are uncertain.

William Cockes, Vicar.
John Lyne.

[E.117/7/1].

APPENDIX E

CHURCH PLATE

“Broken plate received into the office of the Jewelhouse at divers time [from June 1st, 1553] out and from divers Cathedral churches, parish churches, college chapels and others . . .

County Northampton.

From the east part. Brought into the Jewelhouse by Sir Humphrey Stafford Knight and Thomas Manshoo esquire Commissioners, with other of the east part of the said county, that is to say of ten Hundreds, being the one half of that Shire, in gilt parcel gilt and white undefaced.

972 oz. being defaced.

In gilt plate	408 oz.
In parcel gilt	400 oz.
And in white	131 oz.
Waste	33 oz.

Brought . . . by Thomas Morgan deputy to Richard Wake Francis Tanfield and Francis Morgan Esquires, Commissioner, of the hundred of Spelhoe, Wymersley, Cleyley and Newbattle Grave . . .

being defaced	90 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz.
in gilt	22 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz.
in parcel gilt	68 oz.”

From Northampton town there is record only of 10 oz : from the Hundreds of Guilsborough and Fawsley there is only one chalice parcel gilt weighing nine ounces, while five chalices with their patterns came from the Towcester area. Humphrey Brook of Cotton End near Northampton sold two bells of St. Edmund's and had 64 cwt. of lead from the church roof. He sold 15 cwt. to Thomas Griffin at 2/8 the cwt.

A far as I know there is now no vestige of any of these vestments. Of all the treasures, of which these accounts form only a small part, there now remain in the county only a small patten and a few bells.

Even as late as 1556 when Queen Mary had been two years on the throne the church ornaments etc. of the suppressed chantries and guilds in this county were still being sold off at Northampton. There is extant the “account of John Marsh Esq., surveyor there concerning all the singular, the plate, jewels,

ornaments, goods, chattles, stocks of money and lead pertaining or belonging to all the late Colleges, Chantries, Free Chapels, Guilds, fraternities and such like within the said county, taken before William Berners, Thomas Mildmay and John Wiseman Esquires the 20 March 2 and 3 Philip and Mary. [1556]

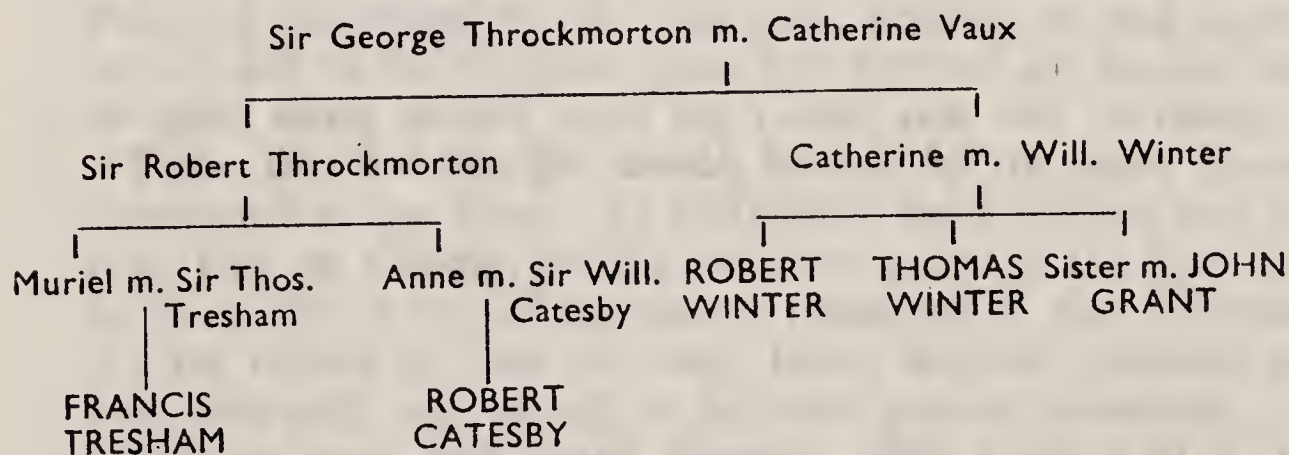
262 ozs. of plate sold at 4/1 $\frac{3}{4}$ an oz.	£37.	5.	0.
Ornaments, goods etc.	45.	10.	8.
ready money	32.	6.	8.
received from Sir Edward Montegue for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$			
fodders of lead coming from the chapels of			
Warmington and Marston Trussel at £4 the			
fodder	13.	12.	0.

£148. 13. 4.

[E.117/11/3 ; E.117/14/69 ; E.117/13/76].

APPENDIX F

CATHERINE VAUX AND THE GUNPOWDER PLOT CONSPIRATORS



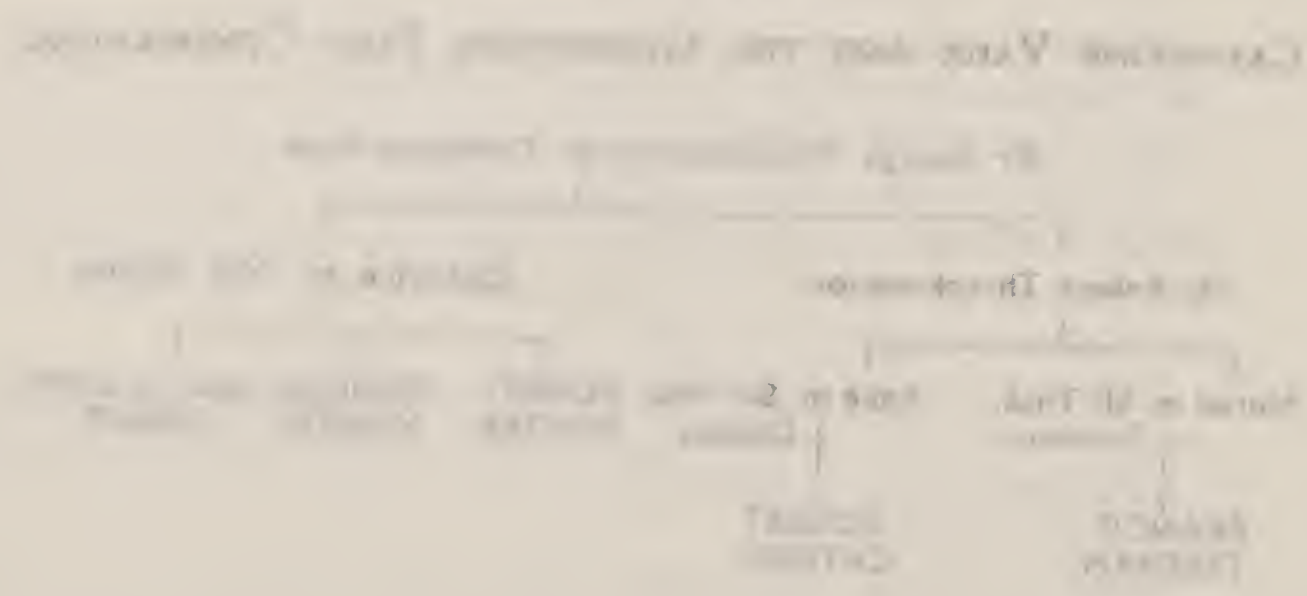
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APPENDIX

APPENDIX



APPENDIX G

THE KING AGAINST EDWARD LORD VAUX 14 MAY, 1612

Hubberd the Attorney General of the King, did exhibit an Indictment against Edward Lord Vaux, Lord of Harrowden, and this was for his refusal to take the Oath of Allegiance, being lawfully offered unto him, accordingly as in this case it is provided by divers Laws of the Land, he then being of the age of 18 years and more. This he refused to take, and so all this was certified to the Court, under the hands of divers of the Privy Council; 1 Martii 9 Jac. the oath was offered to him at Westminster. The Lord VAUX being present at the Bar, was demanded by the Clerk of the Crown (having read the Indictment to him), whether he was guilty or not, of the matters contained in the Indictment. The Lord VAUX desired the Court for to assign him Counsel for to speak for him, he being very ignorant of the proceedings of the Laws of the Land. HUBBERD the Attorney General said unto him, that there was no need of Counsel for to be assigned to him in this case, for though he do pretend ignorance in himself, in the Laws of the Land, (of which no Subject of the Land ought to be ignorant) for that his ignorance of the Law will not excuse him, if so be, that he do offend against the Law, but as this case is, he cannot be ignorant of the Fact, (s) of the refusal by him, he having observed the time, when this was, the place where, and the persons who did offer the oath to him, and before whom this refusal so was, and therefore he cannot be ignorant of this, and to this he may well answer, without any Counsel at all, as to the matter of Fact, (s.) his refusal to take this oath, whether he had done so, or not, and he did therefore press him without any further delay, to make direct answer unto the Court, one way or other.

Nota, that for this his refusal, he was by the Privy Council, committed to the Fleet. FLEMMING chief Justice said unto him, that no Counsel in this case was requisite for him, for if he be guilty or not of the matter contained in this indictment, (s.) his refusal to take the oath, being lawfully tendered unto him, this doth rest merely in his own proper knowledge, unto which he may well make answer. The Lord VAUX then answered and said unto him, that the King gives strength and life unto the Statute, and that he had never refused to take this oath, according to the King's exposition of it. The Court

made answer unto him, that this oath ought to be taken by him, according to the very precise words of it, and that *verbatim* as the oath is, and so was it fully agreed upon by all the Parliament, and the same is not to be taken in any other manner, and he stands here indicted for refusing to take the same oath, according to the form of the Statute in this case provided for, and therefore ought to make answer, whether he be guilty or not guilty of this refusal. HUBBERD the Attorney General said unto him, in your answer, that you will take the oath according to the King's exposition of it, in this your so saying, you do offer hereby very great wrong unto the King, for to make others to believe that the King hath a particular exposition of this Statute to himself, and contrary to the said general Act of Parliament, the which is not so, for the King did never make any other exposition, contrary to the word of the said Statute, neither doth he any ways allow of the taking of this oath in any manner, contrary to the form specified in the Statute.

WILLIAMS Justice said unto him that if he refused to take any line, or any word expressed in the oath, this is a refusal of the whole, and said, that this oath was made only to give unto the King a true testimony of our true and faithful allegiance unto him, and that this should be so, it doth in a very high measure concern the safety of the King. The Lord VAUX made answer to the Court, that if any part of this Oath did touch the Conscience of his Subjects, if it be the pleasure of the King to make a safe exposition of the oath, he would then take it accordingly, and he said, (and to this the Court agreed), that the King hath said that the sole effect of the Statute is, that he may be certified of the true allegiance of his Subjects, and to this he never had, nor will refuse to take any such oath.

FLEMMING chief Justice did press him for to answer directly, without any more circumlocution, whether he was guilty or not guilty, lest that he by his contempt of the Court should double his offence. HUBBERD the Attorney General did then move the Court, that if he would make no other answer, that then the Court would direct a judgment for to be entered against him, that he stood mute according to the statute of 33 H. 8 cap. 12. Rastall in title Trial fo. 145a, bottom. The Lord VAUX made answer to the Court, that he would take so much of the oath as concerned the King's temporal jurisdiction. The Court answered him, that if he would make no other answer, they would then cause a Judgement by a Nihil dicit to be entered against him. The Lord VAUX then demanded of the Court, whether he should be tried by his Peers or not. FLEMMING

chief Justice said unto him, that first, he must answer whether he be guilty or not guilty : and this being done, he shall then have his trial according to the Law, but afterwards, before his answer, he said that he was not here in this case to be tried by his Peers : and upon this he said that at the *Common Law*, in these four cases only, a Peer shall be tried by his Peers, (s.) in *Treason, Felony, misprision of Treason, and misprision of Felony*, and the Statute Law which gives such trial, hath reference unto these, or to other offences made treason or felony, his trial by his Peers shall be as before, and to this effect are all these Stat (s.) 32 H.8. cap 4. Rastall title [*sic*] fo. 404. placito 10. 33. H. 8. cap. 12. Rastall title Trial fo. 415. 35 H.8. cap. 2. Rastall title Trial fo. 416. and in all these, express mention is made of trial by Peers. But in this case of a Premunire, the same being only in effect but a contempt, no trial shall be here in this of a Peer by his Peers. And so the whole Court did agree in this, that he could not here in this case be tried by his Peers. CROKE Justice demanded of him, whether he did think that the Pope hath any authority or that any power under Heaven had authority for to draw him, or any Subject whatsoever, from his true allegiance to his Prince, and whether he did think that the Pope could discharge him from his oath of allegiance, when he pleased. The Lord Vaux made this answer, that he neither could, nor would dispute this, whether the Pope by his Power and Authority could discharge him of this oath, and further said, that he could not determine of the power and authority of the Pope. CROKE Justice said unto him, that for any one to make any doubt of this, the same is a very great sign that there is no true allegiance in him. See the Statute of 3. Jac. cap. 4. Rastall title Crown fo. 88. b. and 1. Jac. 2. and cap. 6. as touching the Oath of allegiance, and the form of it.

The King's Solicitor said that he hath observed four sorts of oaths instituted to testify the true allegiance of Subjects to the King. The first was an oath at the common Law, taken in the Court Leet. The second in 28 : H. 8. cap. 7. a more sharp oath, as touching the Supremacy. Thirdly, 1 Eliz. cap. 1. altering the former Oath of Supremacy in some respects. The fourth, the Oath of Allegiance now in question, instituted as before in 3. & 7 Jac. which is a more mild oath than the others, as it appears, and is in manner agreeing with the form of the oath taken in a Court Baron.

The Lord VAUX made answer, that he thought it better to swear from his heart his true allegiance to the King, than to swear to a matter of the which, he in his conscience hath some

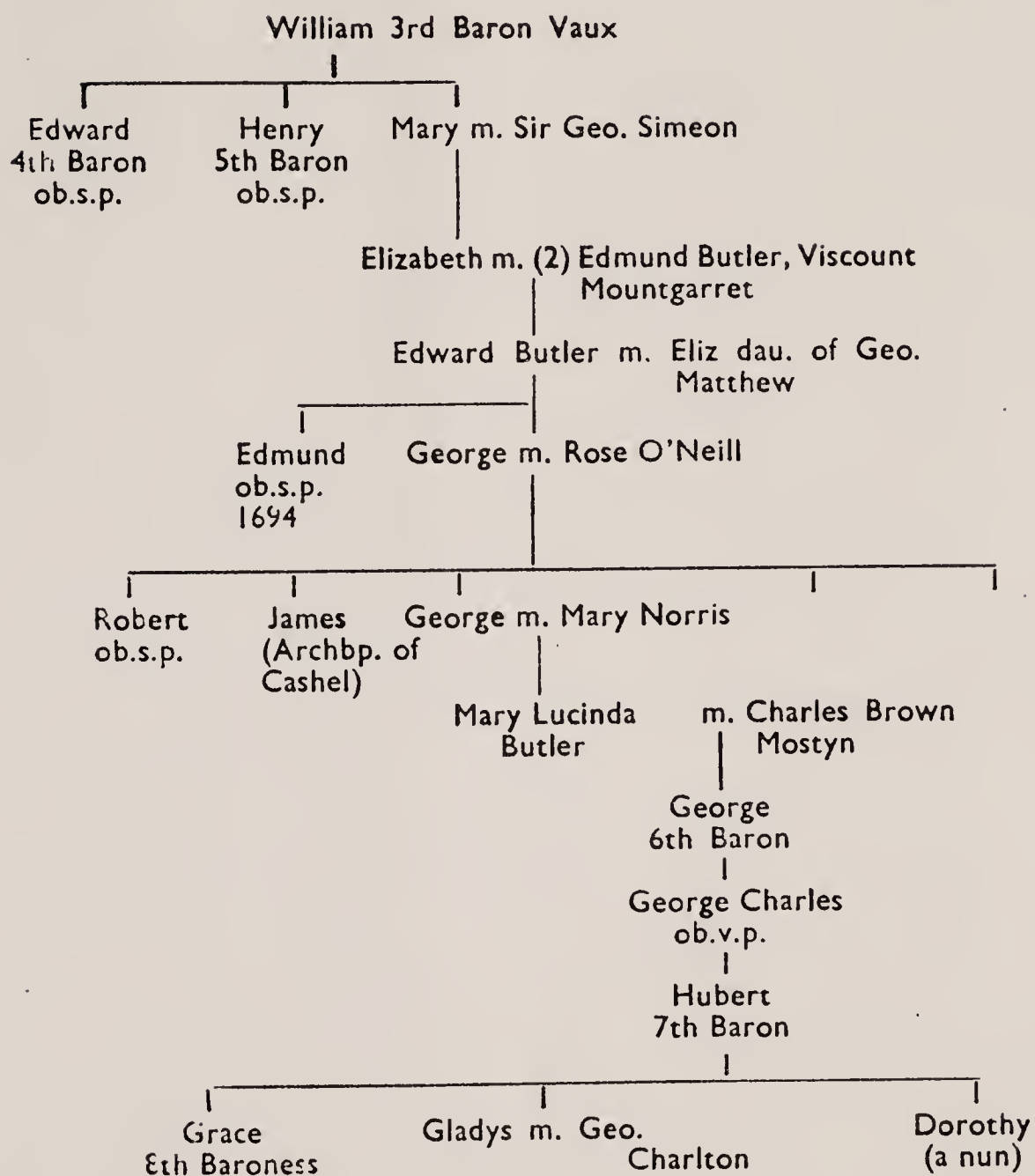
doubt, and that such an oath by him taken shall be for the greater safety of the King. FLEMMING chief Justice then said unto him, that seeing he had thus refused for to take the said Oath, as the same is set down in the Statute, and so thereby appointed to be taken, thought that he would never truly open and declare the matter contained in his heart, for that he so refused to perform the outward matter, which ought for to testify his inward allegiance to the King.

The Lord VAUX did afterwards confess the indictment: then HUBBERD the Attorney General prayed judgement against him for the King. YELVERTON Justice said unto the Lord VAUX, that nothing was tendered unto him to do, but the same which ought to be tendered unto all the King's Subjects, and further he said unto him, that he and all those which should offend in this manner, have incurred the danger of a *Premunire*, the which he hath here by his refusal for to take this oath of Allegiance, being duly tendered unto him, and therefore he pronounced judgement against him according to the Statute of 16 R. 2. cap. Rastall tit. provision and praemunire fo. 328. b. *To be out of the King's Protection, his Lands, Tenements, goods and Chattels to be perpetually forfeited to the King, and for to be imprisoned during his life.*

[*The Reports of Edward Bulstrode*, 1st Part (1657), p. 197.]

APPENDIX H

THE DESCENT OF THE TITLE



PRINCIPAL SOURCES

A.—MANUSCRIPT

PRO Public Record Office

SP. 1	State Papers	Hen. VIII
SP. 12	„	Elizabeth
SP. 14	„	James I
esp. S.P. 14/216		Gunpowder Plot Bk.
SP. 15	„	Addenda
SP. 16	„	Charles I
SP. 29	„	Charles II
SP. 38	„	Docquets
SP. 53	„	Mary Queen of Scots
SP. 77	„	Flanders
SP. 78	„	France
SP. 89	„	Portugal
SP. 98	„	Italy
SP. 101	Newsletters from France	

C. Court of Chancery

esp. C. 54	Close Rolls
C. 66	Patent Rolls
C. 145	Special Inquisitions

E. Exchequer

esp. E. 377	Recusant Rolls
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KB. King's Bench

PRO. 31/6	Transcripts of Phelips MSS
PRO. 31/9	Rome Transcripts
St. Ch.	Star Chamber

Wards Court of Wards and Liveries

B.M. British Museum

Harl.	Harleian MSS
Lansd.	Lansdowne MSS
Add.	Additional MSS
esp. 39828-38	Rushton MSS

Farm St. Trans.	Transcripts at Jesuit House, Farm St. W.1
NRS.	Northants. Record Society. MSS at Lamport Hall.

Pet.	Peterborough Episcopal Archives
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PCC.	Wills at Somerset House
WCA.	Westminster Cathedral Archives

B.—PRINTED

Government Publications

APC.	Acts of the Privy Council
Cal. Cl. R.	Calendar of Close Rolls
Cal. F.R.	„ of Fine Rolls
Cal. IPM.	„ of Inquisitions Post Mortem
Cal. Pat. R.	„ of Patent Rolls
L & P Hen VII	Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Rich. III and Hen. VII
L & P Hen VIII	Letters and Papers of Henry VIII
HMC.	Historical MSS Commission
esp. Rush. Pap.	Various Collections, III. Clarke-Thornhill MSS (now in B.M.)

Collections of Documents

CRS.	Catholic Record Society
Foley	Records of the English Province S.J.
NNQ.	Northants. Notes and Queries
NRS.	Northants. Record Society Publications

County Histories

Baker	<i>Hist. and Antiquities of the County of Northampton</i> (1822-41) by George T. Baker.
Bridges	<i>Hist. and Antiquities of Northamptonshire</i> , by John Bridges. (1791).
VCH.	Victoria County History

Works frequently quoted

Gerard	<i>Autobiography of Fr. John Gerard, S.J.</i> (ed. 1881).
Knox	<i>Records of the English Catholics under the Penal Laws.</i> 1st and 2nd Douai Diaries. ed. T. F. Knox, 1878.
Troubles	<i>Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers</i> , ed. J. Morris 3 vols.
esp. Gerard, <i>Narrative</i>	<i>Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot.</i>
Vaux Peerage	Case before the House of Lords. (H.M. Stationery Office, 1836-7).

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- 18 *ib.* II, 159
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- 21 Materials for Hist. of Hen. VII, (Rolls Series), I, 132
- 22 Cal. IPM. Hen. VII, II, no. 406
- 23 Wards 9/306, p. 89
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- 27 Cal. IPM. Hen. VII, I, 129
- 28 Leland, *Collectanea* (1770), IV, 204
- 29 Polydore Vergil, *Chron.* (ed. 1649), p. 728
- 30 W. C. Metcalfe, *A Book of Knights*, p. 16
- 31 B. M. Harl. 69, fol. 4
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- 29 E. 159/296
- 30 L. & P. IV, Appen. p. 87

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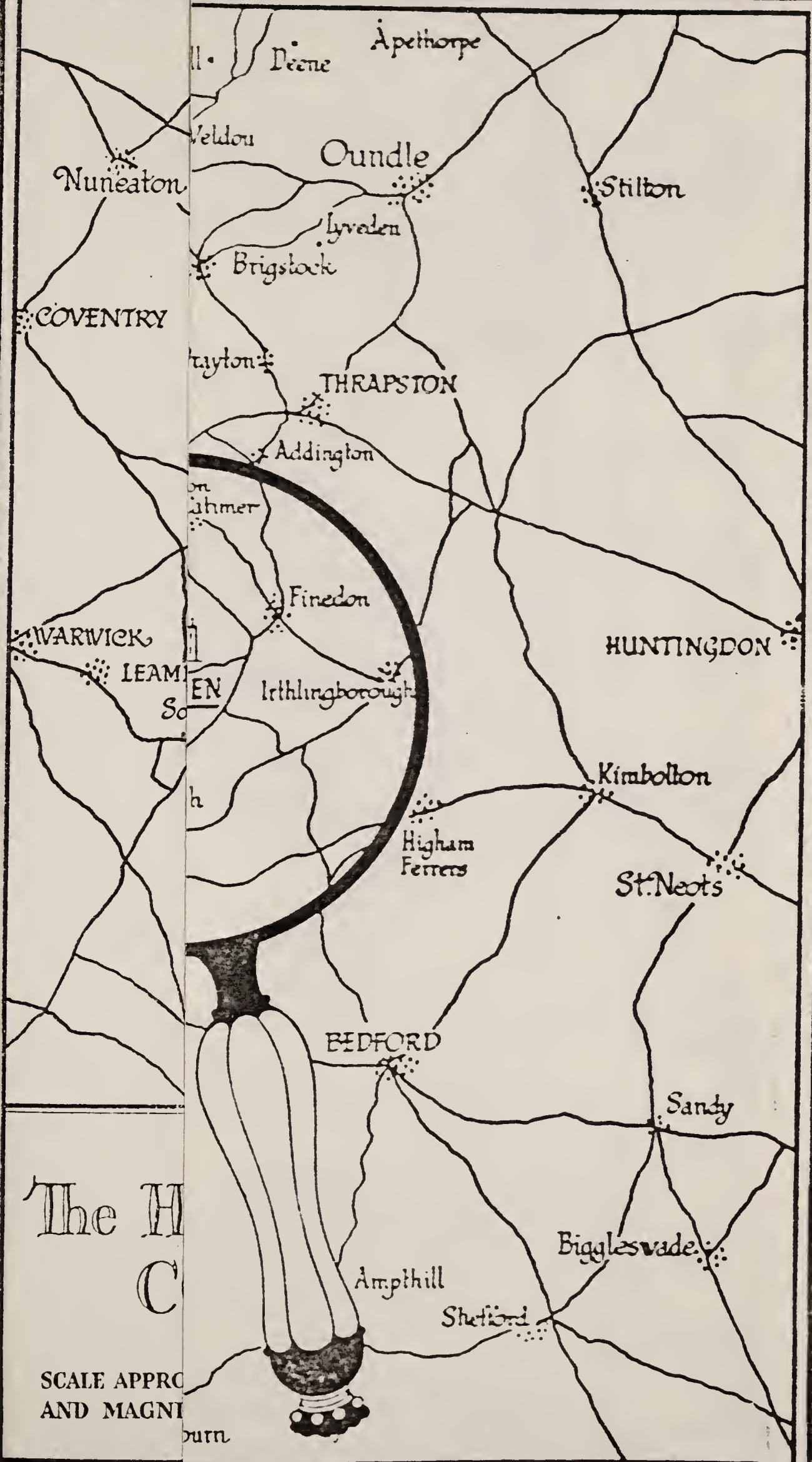
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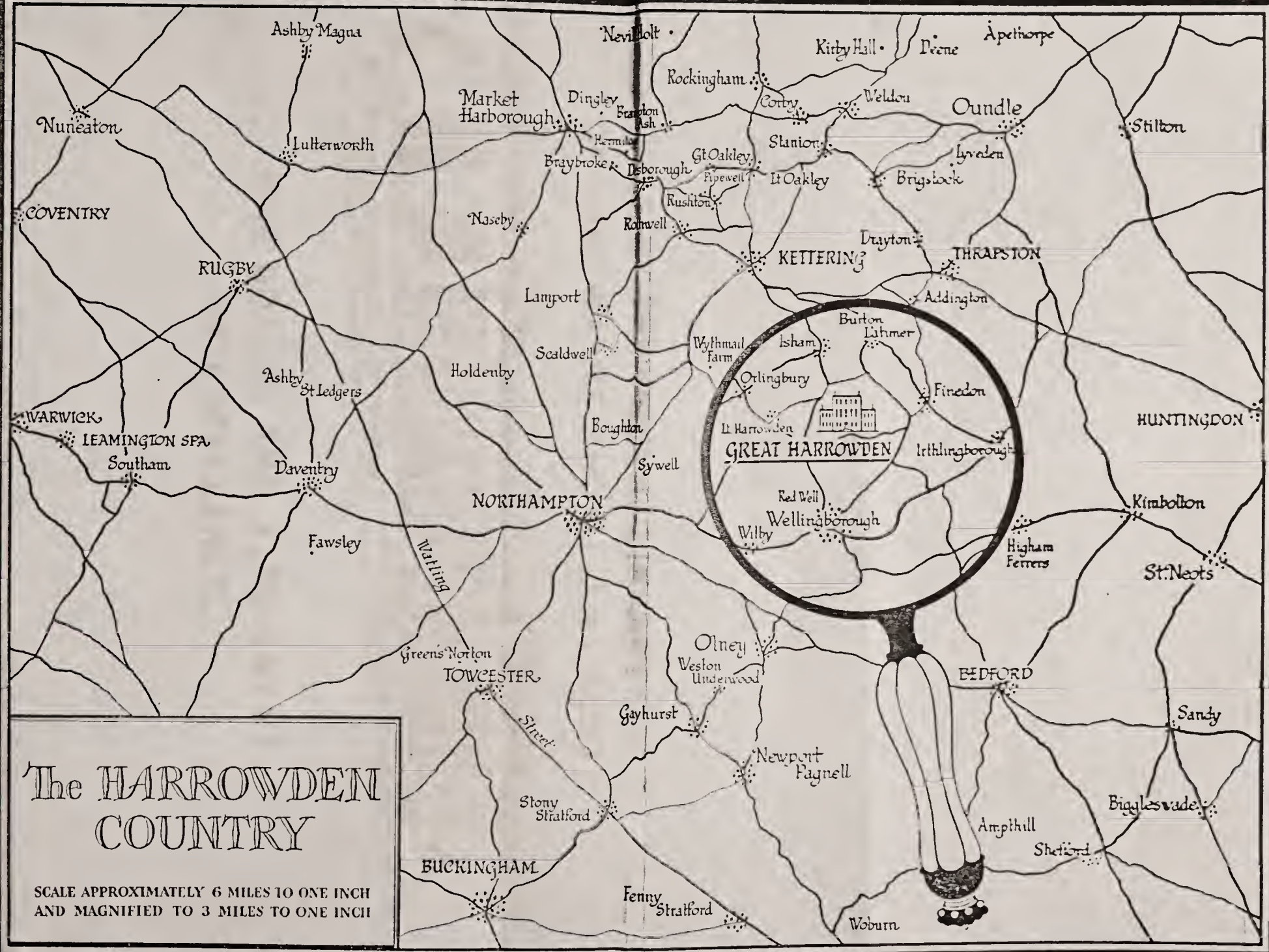
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